



May
34

The American Mercury

13109

THE PLANLESS ROOSEVELT REVOLUTION

by Lawrence Dennis

How to Make a Revolution	<i>Raymond Postgate</i>
Boom Town	<i>Thomas Wolfe</i>
American Propaganda in Russia	<i>Anna Louise Strong</i>
Germany Sinks into Slavery	<i>S. Miles Bouton</i>
The Plight of the Doctor	<i>George W. Aspinwall</i>
Breach of Promise: Still a Racket	<i>Anthony M. Turano</i>
The Russo-Japanese War Myth	<i>George E. Sokolsky</i>
Are Small Towns Doomed?	<i>A Village Trustee</i>
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Agony in the C. W. A.	<i>Ruth L. Porterfield</i>
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Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher

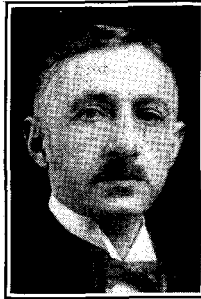
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Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1933

The award of the Nobel Prize consummated a life-time of significant achievement. Although known in America only since about 1923, Bunin has been for almost a generation a name venerated among the Russians, a classic along with Chekhov, Turgenev, and Dostoevski. Born of a noble family in 1870, by the time he was twenty he had won the Pushkin Prize for poetry and by 1909 he was elected an honorary member of the Academy of St. Petersburg, a distinction tend-

ered up to that time only to Chekhov and Maxim Gorky. Since the Bolshevik revolution he has been an exile from his native land, living in Paris.



IVAN BUNIN

It may be of interest to American readers to know that Russian readers owe to Bunin translations into their language of many works that rank as classics in English. He translated, for example, many of the works of Byron and other outstanding English poets, as well as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's famous *Song of Hiawatha*.

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WHO GETS THE MILK PROFITS?

By Benjamin H. Hibbard

The leading agricultural economist of the United States describes in detail the set-up in the milk industry, and explains why the milk farmers have been so bitter against the milk dealers. The recent strikes of the milk farmers failed because they were poorly organized, but the strikes must be taken seriously, because even the farmers have a limit to patience, and unless their injustices are rectified, there will in the near future be an uprising of really dangerous size.

ARYANS AND NON-ARYANS

By Franz Boas

The celebrated Columbia anthropologist here explodes the Nazi myth that there are racial differences between Aryans and non-Aryans. Dr. Boas says that Aryan and non-Aryan are purely linguistic terms, and that those who use them for other reasons are charlatans.

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF RUSSIA

By G. D. H. Cole

A comprehensive and brilliant analysis of the Soviet political system, by one of the foremost political philosophers and economists of England. Mr. Cole considers not only the written constitution of the U.S.S.R., but also the highly important unwritten

basic law of the land. Besides, he correlates the Russian system with the Fascist and Nazi systems. A most timely article, by an authority of international repute.

FLYING IS STILL DANGEROUS

By Kenneth Collings

A former naval aviator and airport manager here shows, and with overwhelming evidence, that the advertising talk that flying is no more dangerous than walking on the street, is simply not true. It is at least eighty-eight times more likely for a person to die in an airplane than in a ground occupation, and in some branches of flying the hazard runs to more than 400 times what it is on earth.

FASCISM IN AMERICAN LAW

By Carey McWilliams

It is not true, says Mr. McWilliams, that American justice is tardy; on the contrary, it is extremely expeditious, far more so than English justice. He argues that the current talk for more speedy justice is Fascist in its motive. The step from "quick justice" to the "judicial" methods of Hitler, he shows, is a short one.

I RECOVER FROM SLEEPING SICKNESS

By Elizabeth Carey

A poignant piece of autobiography. Once read, it will never be forgotten.

UNCLE PALLI

By Hilda Perini

With this story THE AMERICAN MERCURY introduces to the American public a new short story writer of considerable power. This is her first contribution to a magazine of national circulation. She is only twenty-one, but she will be heard from again.

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The AMERICAN MERCURY

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May 1934

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CHECK LIST of NEW BOOKS

HISTORY

RECENT POLITICAL THOUGHT.

By Francis W. Coker.

The D. Appleton-Century Company
\$4 6 x 9; 574 pp. New York

Dr. Coker, who is Cowles professor of government and director of graduate studies in government at Yale, begins with a thorough description of the Socialism of Marx and Engels, and follows it up with a consideration of Fabianism, Revisionism, and Communism. Then he takes up Anarchism, paying particular attention to the doctrines of Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Tolstoy. The Syndicalists and the Guild Socialists also come in for treatment, and after them comes a historical survey of the controversy over democracy, which leads into an analysis of Fascism. Dr. Coker is interested chiefly in exposition, and he has carried out his job competently, though surely not with remarkable brilliance. There are good and long bibliographies at the ends of the chapters. There is an index.

THE VATICAN: YESTERDAY—TODAY—TOMORROW.

By George Seldes. *Harper & Brothers*
\$3.75 5¾ x 8¾; 439 pp. New York

Mr. Seldes has been around the Vatican, and plainly read a few books and articles about it. In the present volume he describes the history and topography of the Vatican buildings, the manner in which a pope is elected, the daily life of Pius XI, and the various branches of the papal government. He also attempts analyses of the Index, the Catholic laws on marriage and divorce, and the papal encyclicals on capital and labor and other public questions. The book is so poorly written and badly organized that laymen will find it almost worthless; they who are at all acquainted with the history of the Vatican will look upon it with contempt.

THE RISE OF INDUSTRIALISM. 1733-1851.

By Marjorie & C. H. B. Quennell.
\$2.50 6 x 9; 222 pp. New York

This is Volume III in the series of "The History of Everyday Things in England," of which the Quennells are the sole authors and illustrators. The years 1733-1851 marked one of the most fundamental changes in the life of England. The machine at last came to stay, and in a very few years it revolutionized completely English farming, trans-

portation, clothing, building, sanitation, working conditions, and even food and entertainment. The Quennells discuss the changes in all these departments simply, so as to make them intelligible to junior readers, and they add point to their text with nearly 200 excellent illustrations.

JOHNSON'S ENGLAND.

Edited by A. S. Turberville.

The Oxford University Press
\$14 6 x 9; 2 vols.; 405 + 404 pp. New York City

These two volumes are planned on similar lines to those of "Shakespeare's England," published in 1916. Twenty-eight contributors describe the England that Dr. Johnson knew; its manners, clothes, sports, amusements; its institutions—the Church, the Army and Navy, the Law; its painting, building, furniture, sculpture and music; its achievements in industry and exploration, science and farming; its education and poor-law relief; its newspapers, inns, prisons, hospitals, poverty and crime. The period covered is roughly the sixty years between 1730, just before Johnson came to London, and 1790, just after his death. The contributors include G. M. Trevelyan, G. D. H. Cole, J. L. and B. Hammond, Osbert Sitwell, and D. Nichol Smith. There are about 120 full-page plates in half-tone and line and many others in the text.

THE SCIENCES

HEREDITY & ENVIRONMENT.

By Gladys C. Schwesinger. *The Macmillan Company*
\$4 6½ x 8; 484 pp. New York

Miss Schwesinger has here summarized in readable form a great deal of the current literature dealing with what psychologists call intelligence and personality. Without the addition of the sub-heading, "Studies in the Genesis of Psychological Characteristics," the title of the book is misleading, since it has little to say in regard to modern work on heredity even as applied to man, and next to nothing on the broader aspect of environment except in the vague sense of social relationships. As long as psychologists continue to talk about personality and intelligence as though they are dealing with a scientifically determined entity, much of their discussion will necessarily remain futile. To the credit of the authoress it should be added that she seems not entirely unaware of the need for simplification before any certain

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progress can be hoped for. Nevertheless, the bulk of the book deals entertainingly and sympathetically with the modern literature about measurements of intelligence and personality.

PEOPLE OF THE SERPENT.

By Edward H. Thompson.

The Houghton Mifflin Company

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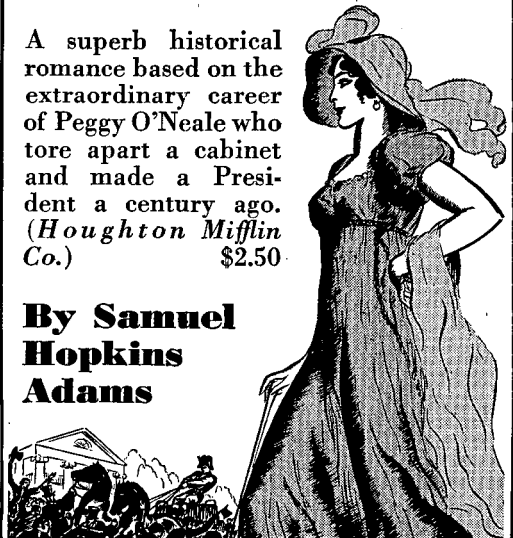
Mr. Thompson spent fifty years in Yucatan, part of the time as American consul at Merida, but mainly as an explorer of the Maya ruins. He finally bought the estate which includes the great ruins of Chichen Itzá, and undertook an elaborate examination of them. Among other things, he explored the famous Well of Sacrifice by the use of divers' apparatus, and had some thrilling adventures. Now the Mexican government has laid claim to the objects he recovered, and his estate has been seized. His book is not a scientific report on his work, but is mainly confined to the human side of it. The narrative is pleasantly written, and is full of interesting stuff.

Continued in back advertising section,
page x

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The American MERCURY

May 1934

THE PLANLESS ROOSEVELT REVOLUTION

BY LAWRENCE DENNIS

PHARAOH, Caesar, George Washington, Napoleon, Lenin and Mussolini can be associated each with a system which is susceptible of a rational explanation and which worked for more than a decade. Mr. Roosevelt has had a year of experimentation with the New Deal, but its architectural outline has yet to emerge. It remains the subject of good journalism and ballyhoo, but, as yet, of no integrated social thought. A series of uncoordinated measures of deficiteering, currency devaluation, dole and reform, the New Deal has been rationalized mainly by the use of two misleading words, "recovery" and "emergency."

The purpose may be recovery, but, up to date, the most obvious consequence is an undermining of an existing system accompanied by the development of no substitute system. To say that it is an emergency which, during the post-war period, has successively produced Communism, Fascism, the New Deal and whatever may be brewing in other great nations, is to talk nonsense. Emergencies do not last ten years. Nothing in the domestic or foreign situation today warrants the expectation that present departures from tradi-

tional American ways will prove less permanent than the social revolutions of Russia or Italy.

A rationalization does not need to be true, but it should be comprehensible and plausible. The rationalizations of the New Deal are not only unsystematic; they are implausible. They neither interpret rationally what is happening nor tell us honestly what to expect in the near future.

It may be objected that President Roosevelt's statements of policy have been intelligible and pleasing to the American people. Quite true, but so were those of Messrs. Insull, Kreuger, Mitchell and the other leaders of the New Era. Indeed, the American people were so satisfied with the propaganda of the New Era that they bought billions of dollars of now worthless securities, surely a mark of high popular confidence.

To pass from assertion to illustration of the planlessness of the New Deal, let us first establish a few obvious points of contradiction in it. Shall prices be forced up, kept down or allowed to take their course? On this vital question we have had, within the space of three days, mutually contradictory statements of public

I

policy by General Johnson and Professor Warren, than whom, at least at this writing, there are no more influential figures in the Roosevelt administration. On January 18, 1934, General Johnson, speaking before the National Retail Dry Goods Association, declared: "If I had only nine words with which to address you, I could do it with more substantial and worthwhile effect than with all these twenty-seven pages—I would rise here and say 'Keep prices down for God's sake. Keep prices down. That, and that alone is the royal road to recovery.'"

Three days later, while the administration's gold bill was in committee, Professor Warren, supported by the exponent of his monetary policies in charge of the Treasury, Mr. Morgenthau, told the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency that "by cutting the gold content of the dollar we raise prices. By raising prices, it becomes easier for men to pay their debts. By raising prices, business starts and profits accrue. It becomes easier to pay taxes. Since it starts business, wages will rise."

These contradictory and incoherent utterances cannot be dismissed as mere opinions of private citizens. They expose the most colossal piece of empiricism in the history of politics—the promise of a rise in prices which will benefit all and injure none; of a rise in wholesale prices without a corresponding rise in retail prices; and of higher prices without hardship for labor from a higher cost of living. These views express policies which two important agencies of government, the N.R.A. and the Treasury, are vigorously and effectively pursuing. Mr. Morgenthau is dumping abroad dollar exchange for foreign gold for the express purpose of raising the American price level. General Johnson is forcing indus-

tries to raise production costs and commanding merchants to keep down prices. (President Roosevelt is making war on private speculation on the Stock Exchange and conducting a government speculation in money with a \$2,000,000,000 fund operating in the exchange markets of the world.) Now a policy either of price adjustment downwards or price adjustment upwards to a better equilibrium can be intelligently defended in argument and, it may be, rationally pursued. But both of these policies cannot be rationally pursued at the same time.

II

In the field of railway administration or coördination, the same contradiction of policies is apparent, as in the injunction of the New Deal legislation to lower operating costs without reducing wages, which constitute 70% of such costs. In the field of banking the contradictions of the New Deal are equally fundamental. Mr. Jones, the head of the R. F. C., rebukes the banks for failing to expand credit and he announces that the government will supplant private credit with public credit in the financing of commerce and industry if the banks do not soon increase their commercial loans. Yet, all the while, the fiscal and tax policies of the New Deal encourage a reduction in loans to business and force an increase in loans to the state.

Why should a bank run the serious risk of loss on loans to private enterprise, even at 6%, when it can lend at 2% or upwards ten times the amount of the bank's cash reserve to the government with absolutely no risk? The Federal Reserve Banks, it will be remembered, can now extend to member banks unlimited credit on government paper at par, so

that any bank can instantly turn any amount of government paper into cash. The logic of the fiscal policy and self-interest for bankers is obvious. The bigger the Federal deficit for banks to finance with the purchase of government paper, the smaller the amount banks need to lend to private borrowers. To complete the statement of the vicious circle, it may be said that the more the Federal government borrows from the banks, the more it lends to private borrowers on the ground that the banks won't lend to them.

Perhaps the nationalization of banking is necessary or desirable. If Mr. Roosevelt thinks it is, why does he not say so? He fails to create conditions which make private loans seem attractive. Perhaps this failure is inevitable. Perhaps Mr. Roosevelt is not anxious to create such conditions as might induce large private loans by banks. Whatever his views on these questions, we know that he is maintaining conditions, by reason of an eagerness to spend and an aversion to tax, under which a bank having, say, \$1,000,000 in capital can earn 20% a year on its capital simply by buying \$10,000,000 of government paper bearing 2% interest, all without risk or operating cost for the bank. And, while maintaining these absurd conditions, Mr. Roosevelt blames the banks for reacting logically to his fiscal policy by a curtailment of private loans and an expansion of government loans.

Such contradictions in New Deal policies can be cited indefinitely, but it seems unnecessary to pile Ossa on Pelion. The conclusions need little proving: The New Deal is planless. Any series of state enterprises prosecuted without a plan must be chaotic. The obvious reason why war or State Socialism must be conducted by one coördinated authority according to one plan is that those in charge of activi-

ties must know and be agreed about what they are doing. Government officials under a liberal state may differ as to the desirability of creating a new tax or passing a new law, but not about the necessity for tax collection and law enforcement. In a few words, officials can disagree about what the state is not doing, but they must agree about what it is doing.

If the state tries to do nearly everything, as in Communist Russia, there must be agreement about nearly everything. It is as simple as that. Such is the logic of the planned economy and its corollary, a dictatorship. Once the state enlarges the ambit of its activities, as Mr. Roosevelt is having it do, to such an extent that the agreements of the Constitution and the laws are not sufficient, then a new political or social theory must embody such additional agreements as are essential to the successful operation of the new state. And this new political and social theory of the planned economy must be interpreted and enforced by one central authority.

Mr. Roosevelt's state is doing a great many things about the doing of which there is neither general understanding nor agreement. There is merely an absence of effective opposition or criticism, due, principally, to the theory that this is an emergency and that Mr. Roosevelt is a peculiarly gifted man.

As most of the criticism of Mr. Roosevelt's policies comes from people who have been long in power and recently had their policies crushingly discredited by events, it is not strange that the attitude of the man in the street towards the New Deal should be to give it a chance without inquiring closely into its implications. For a new political system, this type of popular approval or acquiescence is most peculiar and somewhat un-

usual among historical precedents. This acquiescence is not the kind of agreement reached by people who, having read the Federalist papers, created the American Constitution, or who, having read "Das Kapital," created the Soviet Union of Russian Republics. It is the naïve, hopeful submission of a people who have been rather badly battered by the economic storm and are now momentarily hypnotizing themselves into a pleasant daydream of safety and prosperity within the snug harbor of an expansive smile and a comforting radio voice.

But, while Mr. Roosevelt beams and caresses, he goes on undoing the American system. Such changes as he is making should be, but are not being, the subject matter of a systematic plan and intelligent agreement arrived at after full discussion by a fairly numerous group of members of the government party. Of course, a social revolution has to be conducted by a revolutionary party which believes in the revolution. It cannot be conducted by a genial personality, seconded by a corps of academic experts and recruits from the ranks of Federal job and benefit seekers. If the Democratic Party is the American party of social revolution, certainly very few Democrats are aware of the fact or of the nature of the revolution. There is, of course, a certain piquancy to the idea of a revolution being conducted by people who don't know what they are doing. But the result is likely to be a mess rather than a new social system. Of course, builders will, doubtless, sooner or later, be put on the job, as they were when Napoleon followed the commune or when Lenin followed Kerensky.

Continuing with the factual and the actual, we may remark that the Roosevelt state is stepping outside of the traditional liberal rôle of a provider of public safety,

sanitation, instruction and enforcement of contracts. It is assuming the functions of economic planning, industrial control, interference with the free market, price fixing, and modifying contracts. About these problems there is no agreement or understanding of what is being done, because there is no adequate theory. Take the subject of contracts, for instance. Under the liberal state every one was more or less agreed that legal contracts ought to be enforced and that a dollar meant a fixed quantity of physical gold or its equivalent in value at the market price of gold. Mr. Roosevelt's state terminates this agreement and decides that millions of legal contracts involving over \$200,000,000,000 must be rewritten and that a dollar may mean whatever he and Congress, with the advice and consent of Professor Warren, may, from time to time, determine. It is superfluous to argue that if Congress can devalue the dollar 40% when there is no necessity to do so, it can do it again.

III

If our new theory of contractual relations is to be that contracts are subject to modification from time to time as the public authority may deem necessary in the public interest, then we must have an entirely new theory of jurisprudence and administration. This is needed both to rationalize for general understanding, and to render workable the institution of contract in any complex society which does not want to be reduced to regiments of state rationed and ordered persons. Modification of contracts in the public interest cannot be left to the legislatures of one Federal government and forty-eight different State governments, plus the army of judges and administrative officers of each of these forty-nine governments.

We may freely grant that social right is paramount to private right and that the opinion of any authorized exponent—legislator, judge or official—of the public interest is as good as that of the next one, if not a damn sight better. Still, we cannot escape the conclusion that we shall have utter chaos in a few years if the government right to modify contracts is not exercised by a single authority and in accordance with a single theory.

The point I am laboring in this article is not an issue of right or wrong or even of any personal preference. It is purely a practical or administrative consideration that dictates a single authority and a single theory for a planned society or the modification of private contracts. Our present Constitution does not allow Mr. Roosevelt, his Brain Trust and his subservient Congress to constitute such a unique authority or to enforce any unified concept of the public interest. Probably a part of the explanation of Mr. Roosevelt's failure to propound a theory of public policy in respect to contracts is to be found in his realization of the constitutional limitations within which he is circumscribed.

Nor can it be expected that the courts and the quasi-judicial and administrative agencies of governmental regulation, such as the Federal Trade Commission, the Interstate Commerce Commission and innumerable others, exercising jurisdiction of regulative power affecting the interpretation and fulfillment of contracts, can conceivably coördinate the millions of interferences of the public authority with private contract which are a necessary part of any planned economy. At present, the fundamental issue is evaded by having a five to four majority of the Supreme Court invoke the false premise of emergency to justify a specific impairment of

contract in the public interest. The courts can, and probably will, withhold the judicial veto in respect of New Deal measures, but this complacency in no way cures the defect of a lack of coördination. Specifically, how can an insurance company pay insurance claims in Massachusetts according to one theory of contracts, if its claims against its mortgage debtors in Minnesota are adjudicated according to another theory? So far, the New Deal policy in respect to contracts is founded neither on a uniform law nor a general theory; it is founded on political opportunism seeking to meet specific problems with specific remedies.

If debtors need relief, and few would deny that they do, the scheme of relief, whatever it may be and whatever modification of contracts it may entail, must be uniform for the entire country. As yet, Mr. Roosevelt has formulated no uniform scheme of debt relief, other than that of currency devaluation, the value of which to debtors still remains to be demonstrated. Relief under the New Deal seems to be a matter of random modifications of contract and largesses with the printing press and the taxpayer's money. This Santa Claus theory of relief may be appropriate to a genuine emergency like an earthquake or a big fire. Over any considerable period of time, however, the state must either let the economic wrongs of private individuals right themselves or else undertake to right these wrongs according to a body of law and social theory. A policy of righting wrongs by currency devaluation or uncoordinated modifications of contracts amounts to robbing Peter to pay Paul.

As for the making of prices in an open market, it was formerly agreed that this process should be left to bargaining under a system of legal freedom to contract. The

Roosevelt state now decides that it is unsatisfactory to have prices fixed by the pressures of supply, demand and economic necessity in an otherwise free market. The state must fix prices by the A.A.A., by industrial control of wages and hours through the N.R.A. by unlimited currency, credit and interest rate manipulation. I do not challenge the premise that the results of the open market are unsatisfactory. I merely make the point that state interferences with the market must be conducted according to a complete social theory. Mr. Roosevelt says that the farmers do not get a square deal in the open market and gives them a billion dollars a year of taxpayers' money. On the grounds of sound social mechanics or simple equity I would say, "State equity in the market for one, the same state equity in the market for all." Price fixing for certain classes is not only unworkable but inequitable. For these reasons Mr. Roosevelt dare not embody his policies in a social system. If the food-growers have not got a fair price in the market, neither have many other groups,—for instance, the sweated workers of the needle trades. Equity and the price structure make an integrated whole. The New Deal does not.

IV

Another agreement of our dying liberal state was that private enterprise should be comparatively free. Bankers, for instance, were allowed to use their judgment as to how much credit they created and what they did with it, provided they maintained certain legal ratios between deposits and capital and reserves, and, of course, provided they obeyed the law. If they made mistakes of judgment, there were the processes of closure, liquidation

and reorganization to correct such errors. If the Roosevelt state now finds that bank credit has to be socially limited as to total amount, directed as to use and guaranteed as to soundness (deposit guaranty), a wholly new theory and technique of administration must be developed.

In this field we shall have complete chaos in a few years if all government decisions are not made according to some coördinated plan and theory. Without such a plan credit will be expanded until the unit of currency becomes worthless and credit will be dispensed in ways that will discriminate against regions, industries and occupations. The evils of lobbying for tariff favors or pork barrel appropriations will seem as nothing compared with the abuses that will grow up if the government attempts to dispense credit among different regions and industries according to the intuitions or inspirations of a President seeking reelection and his subordinate officials currying his favor.

In the field of industrial control as well as credit creation and control, Mr. Roosevelt's policies of well intentioned opportunism make two fundamental mistakes. They ignore the integration of finance and industry and assume that different parts of our economic machine can be put right, bit by bit, or piece by piece; and they assume that socially desirable results are largely matters of good morals and effective policing. The fact, of course, is, as every European dictator of a planned economy can tell Mr. Roosevelt, that reform and righteousness are not the major concerns of a socialized state. Stalin and Hitler are little interested in reform. They are first of all social engineers who have to keep a social machine running. Reformers are like policemen. They do not have to see that people have jobs, food and a fairly good time.

Mr. Roosevelt is apparently hoping and trying both to reform capitalism and to make it work. He hopes to reform it with the aid of the N.R.A., the Securities and Stock Exchange Regulation Acts, and the measures for the control of finance and currency. He hopes to make it work by means of heavy doses of inflation. His advisers are, for the most part, a soft-thinking crew of romanticists. In the first place, no one has ever seen a reformed capitalism in operation. In the second place, no one has ever proved in theory that a reformed capitalism would work. And, in the third place, capitalism has always worked best when it was most unreformed.

A full dinner pail, not righteousness or reform, is the first concern of a state committed to economic planning or just good old-fashioned meddling with business. It is perfectly possible to starve in the midst of economic righteousness, as millions have done under a Communist dictatorship of the workers in the interests of the workers. And we have had occasion to observe for over half a century a steadily rising standard of living of the workers accompanied and accelerated by the most wicked and unbridled predatory capitalism. During the period of war profiteering, the standard of living of the American and British workers rose by more than 10% above the pre-war level. Righteousness in finance may spell paralysis of new capital investment. The suppression of predatory speculation in Wall Street may mean the end of new private financing of industry. Fair competition in industry may turn out to be no private competition at all.

The theory of industrial control under the N.R.A. is no more clear than its practises. The agreements are called voluntary and coöperative when, as a matter

of fact, they are forced by government coercion, often through devious and indirect methods. A non-conforming industrialist may be coerced by denial of government contracts or a refusal of R.F.C. credit on trumped up technicalities. The N.R.A. of course, is not sure of its power or clear as to its methods and objectives. It is an agency appropriate to a dictatorial, collectivistic government grafted on a non-collectivistic, liberal government. Such an agency and such functions cannot be integrated into our American system.

The statements of the theory of this new industrial control say little more than that it is intended to make everybody happy by preventing badness and encouraging goodness. It is assumed that goodness is something absolute and universal. It is forgotten that what may be goodness under Socialism may be badness under capitalism and vice versa. Business men are to compete fairly, get fair profits, sell at fair prices, avoid waste, pay fair wages, and sell good goods. All of this is as unattackable as the Ten Commandments and about as irrelevant as the Ten Commandments to the problems of an inadequate market for the sale of goods or labor.

Meanwhile, actions speak louder than words, even the words of General Johnson, which is going some. Senators Borah and Nye have had the courage to give expression on the floor of the Senate to the complaints that the N.R.A. codes are driving small business men out of business and maintaining prices which permit profiteering at the expense of the consuming public. Frederick J. Schlink, president of Consumers Research, made similar charges before the American Academy of Political Science at Philadelphia. I am reliably informed by an economist who keeps tab on the latest corporate

developments that the concentration of control in some 200 large corporations has increased from 45% of all industrial capital in 1930 to 55% in 1933. The President has met these complaints with the statement and executive order of January 20, 1934. It was declared that codes could not be used for price fixing of a discriminatory character. And it was provided that complainants may take their troubles to the Federal Trade Commission. But there is no more a body of theory according to which to redress these wrongs than there is for preventing them.

V

The N.R.A., being founded on no theory of the state, makes the wholly unrealistic assumption that business men will agree and coöperate successfully under the aegis of the state if given an opportunity to do so. It is not realized that if business men were capable of loyal coöperation for mutual advantage and social welfare, there would be no need for government intervention. The state has never prevented association and coöperation among business men for the purposes of the N.R.A. Such coöperation has never been prevented by any factor other than that of the business men themselves.

Government is a matter of using force, not securing coöperation. Where pure coöperation is possible, government intervention is unnecessary and mischievous. The eternal question for government is not that of whether government would like to have certain things done, but whether government is disposed to use force to have them done. Preaching is an excellent thing in a liberal state, but, as long as there is freedom of speech and the press, it is not necessary for government officials to be preachers. Govern-

ment should govern. If the N.R.A. is to be more than a pulpit for the evangelical General Johnson, it must be fitted into a theory of government yet to be devised. It makes no difference whether it is a matter of making children go to primary school or making industry operate in some desired manner, the problem for the state is one of using force, not preaching coöperation.

The passing of the liberal American state marks the end of the principle of separation of powers and a return to the age-old principle of coördination of power. Separation of powers in this country has been functional—a division between the legislative, judicial and administrative branches of government—and regional—division of government into forty-nine sovereignties. Now a planned economy, like a war, calls for unified command, a single set of objectives, a single plan of campaign, a single directing will. Law becomes an instrument of administration and not a bill of rights. Law is for the governed and not the governing. There is no escape from the logic of this necessity. There must be agreement about the things the state is doing. If the state is trying to do nearly everything there must be agreement about nearly everything.

The old liberal state supposed that the people, given the equal protection of the laws, can solve their own problems. The new Roosevelt state is proceeding on the supposition that they cannot solve their own problems and that the state must plan their economic life. But a planned economy calls for a state scheme of the good life as well as an economic plan for its realization.

A planned economy, like a war, is essentially an enterprise in which the state is giving orders to everybody. The liberal state gave few orders, and they were easily

obeyed. Mr. Roosevelt is giving a great many orders and they are not easy to obey. Viewing the national economic enterprise of government from a slightly different angle, we may say that it is a quest after a number of solutions of inter-related problems. The inevitability of a unique plan is obvious.

A master mind and will cannot see all, know all, resolve all problems, make all decisions, issue all orders. The master mind or leader who conceals his plan or hasn't one—which was probably the case of Kerensky—is really finessing against his partners.

Hero worship is a wholly admirable human habit. Mr. Roosevelt's birthday was recently celebrated like that of a European king or a Communist dictator, all of which merely proves that Americans are normal folk like Europeans. There flourishes, however, in this country an illusion about heroes which is peculiar to a business civilization. It is the naïve idea that the superman possesses a trade secret. As a matter of fact, truly great political leaders have never possessed or practised consciously what might fairly be called personal secrets. There are, of course, things about everyone and everything, including the multiplication table, which defy explanation. But no class of men has ever gone to greater pains to reveal their secrets than the outstanding political leaders. Even all successful and long-lived gods go to a lot of trouble to reveal themselves. Monarchists, Communists, Fascists, and theologians all undertake to reveal the secrets of their supermen and gods.

VI

No opportunist or empiricist ever left much behind him except disillusionment and disappointment. The great leaders had

each his system and theory. Napoleon or Caesar, Cromwell or Washington, Lenin or Mussolini—each stands for a system. It gives me peculiar satisfaction to stress the fact that the founders of the American Republic were great political theorists. The present day commercial babbler which sneers at doctrinary or theoretical politics is as un-American as it is asinine. Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, the Adamases, and Alexander Hamilton were as copious writers and lucid exponents of their political system as Lenin or Mussolini. All of these leaders were infinitely more practical than the so-called practical American business man whose system is now in collapse.

To say that a political leader has a theory, system or doctrine is merely to state that he and his followers know what they are doing and where they are going. It is impossible to follow a leader without a system. His followers cannot be seeking his decisions on every problem. Some small minds think it a mark of shrewdness to keep people guessing. But a builder can never keep spectators or collaborators in doubt as to what he is building, be it the Great Pyramid, the Panama Canal or a planned society. Great edifices must be erected in the full view of mankind and with the intelligent assistance of men. They do not result from a master mind going into a huddle with his Brain Trust. A social revolution is an exercise in building. Its leader must be a social architect. Being shrewd, having trade secrets, keeping one's ear to the ground, studying the whims of popular favor—all these are tricks with which to sell medicine at a county fair or to catch votes in municipal elections. A leader of men must have a plan and, right or wrong, good or bad, the plan must have meaning to his followers.

In the post-war period I have had occasion rather closely to observe two important types of passing phenomena which illustrate our popular tendency to associate a secret magic with a temporarily successful man. On my return from France to Massachusetts in September, 1919, I found New England in the throes of Ponzi. It just so happened, following my demobilization, that I had spent some three months wandering around Europe for recreation. One of my less noble recreations had been that of playing the then boiling foreign exchange markets, on a shoe string, more or less as one plays the stock market. In this way I had acquired a fairly up-to-the-minute knowledge of the current possibilities of profit-making in foreign exchange, which were not unlike those of making money at any other form of gambling. But I quickly discovered that I could seldom discuss Ponzi with any one in New England without making myself extremely disagreeable. When I insisted that it was quite impossible for Ponzi or any one else to have a sure-shot secret of making large profits in exchange trading, I was crushed by a blunt statement that it was a piece of conceit on my part to think that I was as clever as Ponzi.

The years passed. During the late New Era I found myself working for an international banking firm in Wall Street. I had pleasant and intimate personal relations with some of the brightest and nicest young men in the street, of the big shot variety. Again I found myself becoming a nuisance to my friends by reasons of questions I asked and doubts I mildly ventured about the magic of gentlemen like Messrs. Kreuger, Insull, Mitchell and others. When I asked how foreign loans could be repaid if we needed a favorable balance of commodity trade in order to remain prosperous, or how investment

trusts could make millions by trading with one another in common stocks, or how industry could go on expanding in a world of falling prices, declining birth rates and stagnant migration, I was met by pitying glances and rude replies. I came to be regarded by my best friends as something of a pathological case because I wanted to have the new system explained to me.

The moral of John Law, Ponzi and Kreuger is that success in getting things done and in enjoying wide public favor for a short time does not prove that opportunism is a substitute for a workable system. The wizards of the late New Era were successful and enjoyed public confidence for a much longer period than Mr. Roosevelt has as yet been in the White House. And it should not be forgotten that it was largely luck that the bank crisis did not break two or three months after, instead of two or three days before, his inauguration. Taking office, in a constitutional manner, just as the greatest single economic calamity in our history broke, constituted a perfect invitation to, and excuse for, opportunistic empiricism.

Successful empiricism requires an unusual degree of public acquiescence and confidence. Had the bank closing followed by two or three months Mr. Roosevelt's inauguration, he could not have reckoned with a sufficient measure of public confidence to launch successfully a policy of empiricism. A leader who rules with a system rather than empiricism has to build up, or to find built up for him, a body of intelligent understanding, conviction and sympathy in respect of his system. A leader who finds himself suddenly in power at a moment of crisis has to choose between the easy ways of empiricism or the harder paths of system. The bank holiday was an emergency. The de-

pression is not an emergency. Mr. Roosevelt turned to hasty empiricism. With it he met the emergency. The depression, however, remains. And the policies of empiricism cannot work for any length of time.

Mr. Roosevelt's empirical methods captured the imagination of the people and undoubtedly induced the upturn from the extreme economic lows of June, 1932, to March, 1933. But, prolonged for any length of time, the measures of opportunism or empiricism, whether of John Law, Ivar Kreuger or President Roosevelt, begin to feed on the deceptions they produce. Popular enthusiasm for any type of empiricism is not that of conviction or deep loyalty to an idea. It is not the spirit that carried Caesar's legions into Gaul, that held together the ragged American patriots during the winter of Valley Forge, that carries on the Russian experiment through famine and want.

No, the enthusiasm over the New Deal is largely that of people who think they are getting something for nothing. It is the same type of enthusiasm that is responsible for every temporary success achieved by empiricism. In this instance, it is the enthusiasm of taxpayers who want to receive public money without paying higher taxes, of farmers who want a gift of a billion dollars a year of public money, of speculators who have big paper profits on the results of currency devaluation. Of course, the four or five millions out of the fifteen millions of unemployed last year who have received jobs also share the general enthusiasm.

The beneficiaries of a \$10,000,000,000 deficit, or of a 40% devaluation of the currency, or of gifts of taxpayers' money, naturally feel that it is a good system, that it works, and that it should not be criti-

cized. The truth is that it is not a system at all, because the government cannot go on disbursing \$10,000,000,000 a year of borrowed dollars having the purchasing power of 1933 dollars, nor can it keep on devaluing the dollar. After all, a currency can be taken only from 100 to 0, and Mr. Roosevelt has already covered nearly half the road.

Borrowing, currency devaluation, and the dole do not constitute a social system, nor the elements of any sort of good government. They are instruments of misgovernment. Communism and Fascism, as well as sound capitalism, have tried to avoid these measures. Mr. Roosevelt has embraced them. Professor Tugwell, the Alexander Hamilton of the New Deal, in a recent magazine article made the epoch-making contribution to economic thought of stating that it is a sound public investment to run up a five or ten billion dollar Federal deficit to restore prosperity. Obviously, if borrowing and spending five or ten billion dollars would restore our national income from \$40,000,000,000 to \$90,000,000,000 a year, in dollars of the same purchasing power, the deficit and its attendant borrowing would be a good investment. But Professor Tugwell offered no more convincing arguments than those of Mr. Kreuger or Mr. Mitchell to support the policy of prosperity by spending borrowed money. The borrowing policies of the Kreguers and Mitchells during the New Era shattered private credit and developed no workable system. Is there any reason to suppose that President Roosevelt can make of these policies a workable system or avoid shattering public credit if he continues to use them?

So far, Mr. Roosevelt has shown himself to be a master showman but not a master builder. To build, you need a plan.

HOW TO MAKE A REVOLUTION

BY RAYMOND POSTGATE

REVOLUTION to the average man means only one thing. It means the splendor of the shouting and the pikes; noble deaths upon the barricades; the rattle of rifles and the cry of the dying; the broken and shaking notes of the International or the Marseillaise between the heavy thunder of the guns. Armed revolt is the traditional method of revolution, and it is very difficult to deny that hardly any examples of successful revolution by peaceful means are to be found in history.

An enormous number of examples of armed revolt are available for our study and to mention them all would be utterly impossible. There are so many that at the end of the last century it seemed that some sort of general policy had been evolved. There was a fair knowledge of street-fighting technique, whose details vary from town to town, and whose general principle is to strike at the vital spots of the enemy. These in Blanqui's days were administrative centres and armories; in Trotsky's they are electric stations, railways and telephone exchanges. There was one general principle which was, in a sentence: "Arm the revolutionaries—the workers—and disarm the existing forces." If this was not done, during or instantly after the revolution, defeat was certain; if it was, the return of the old régime was made exceedingly difficult.

Blanqui's followers, in 1839, went from gun-shop to gun-shop, looting in order to fulfil the first half of this instruction.

They were unhappily not able to attempt the second. All the revolutions of 1848 failed precisely from neglect of this elementary principle. The revolutionary governments occupied their new seats and drafted constitutions. They accepted with a pleased bow the assurances of the devotion of the generals and admirals of the old régime, and left them and their officers undisturbed. The very moment that the reactionary forces were strong enough the same admirals and generals, often by open force, expelled the revolutionary government.

In 1905, in Russia, the general strike was enough to secure the promise of a constitution but not its observance. During the second general strike the strikers found themselves helpless before the arms of the Cossacks, and the strike had to be called off in defeat. The Soviet had omitted to arm, or could not arm, its supporters.

Even later examples show the truth of this. Consider, for example, the German revolution of 1918. It begged Hindenburg to stay at the head of the army, and it only in part removed Junker and Nationalist officers and officials. Certainly, its Reichswehr was only partly Nationalist, but a separate Republican organization (the Reichsbanner) was necessary to defend the Republic. In the end, there was no force which was both competent and willing to stand up to Hitler's Brown Shirts. When a struggle was threatened

in Prussia, the same Bauer who had once broken Kapp by a general strike, meekly left his office at the smallest show of force. "A man who gave up power," said Hitler, perfectly justly, "to eleven men and a lieutenant had no right ever to be in power at all."

The present balance of power in Spain turns exactly upon the same question. The Clericals question how far the army and the anti-labor Guardia Civil have retained their pre-revolution officers and sentiments. So do the Socialists. Seven thousand army officers have been retired: they are royalists. But what are the remainder? They are probably not Socialists. The Guardia Civil has been restrained from breaking strikes, its previous duty. But it has not changed its personnel: its members put down their great green-clad hams among the proletariat in the crowded trains as arrogantly as ever, and sit stiff with rifles and shiny, hard, black helmets, staring at their ununiformed neighbors. There is no effective Republican guard.

II

But these two examples only prove that this old maxim is still valid for protecting a revolution which takes a period of years or months to unroll itself. It is not any longer a valid instruction on how to start and win a revolution. The members of the British or American working class cannot any more make a revolution by looting gun-shops and then storming Buckingham Palace or the White House. Such instructions are as out of date as manuals on pike-making and barricade building.

When I was editor of the official British Communist journal, I was visited by a survivor of the Paris Commune—a venerable and eager white-bearded old man

named Chamon. He came to deliver an instruction, as from an experienced revolutionary.

"Your Executive Committee," he said, "is betraying the workers. It is probably composed of espys. It is losing its chances. Perceive. I live in Kensington, near the Cromwell Road. What an expanse of road, and how suitable for barricades! All through the winter you have the most benevolent fogs, in which these constructions could be made at leisure. And there are working-class districts near from which could pour forth the revolutionaries. Yet the police walk undisturbed as ever. No orders have been issued! But consider how admirable is the opportunity, and how entirely unprepared the enemy. Ah, comrade, if it is but the lack of experience that deters you, I, I who speak to you, old though I am, will direct the building of the first barricade!"

He left me, after I had promised to convey his views to the executive. As he left, a whole past generation of revolutionaries seemed to vanish with him. Their tactics and their theories are no longer valid: they are only historical curiosities. Hyndman and Lenin sought to find examples from the history of the Commune and even of the great French Revolution, but their endeavors were necessarily unsuccessful.

What has essentially altered the problem is chiefly the change in transport facilities, and the consequent greater powers of suppression which are in the hands of the authorities.

The conflicts between the Assembly and the King in France in 1789 to us read like the accounts of chess matches between Lasker and Capablanca. Each side takes an immense time to decide on its next move. They sit at the board silently contemplating the pieces for months. Moves

that appear to strike right at the heart of the opponent's forces, that threaten an immediate checkmate, remain unanswered for weeks while the King or the Assembly reflect on the matter.

The action of the Assembly, for example, in meeting at the Tennis Court in defiance of orders, and swearing an oath not to disperse until it had put an end to the absolute monarchy—this was surely a direct thrust to the heart. How long would, say, the Reichstag have lasted in 1933 if its majority had had the reckless idea of offering such a defiance to Herr Hitler? But King Louis XVI waited for weeks before taking any action about it. The reason was that Marshal de Broglie was away in the East of France, and the time that it took to bring him in and to assemble reliable troops was very considerable. Meanwhile, the game had to be held up. Desmoulins, on his side, could discover the royal plot, announce it to the faubourgs, stir them up day after day, and after taking his time, capture the Bastille.

From 1789 to 1792, three years, there was a continuous see-sawing struggle between the King and the people, and nobody could have told an observer where the real seat of power was. The people marched on Versailles or on the palace again and again. If they were successful, the King made concessions. If they were not, they retired back to their faubourgs and thought the matter over, to return again another day. The "sections" met at their own chosen time, discussed their failure, and made a fresh attempt a little later. This process of "holding an inquest" on a defeated revolution was so successful that to this day Communists look to it as a valid method, regardless of the change in circumstances.

But revolutionaries today cannot assault

the government, fail, and retire undisturbed to argue over the defeat as if it were a golf match. They will find that overnight they have become hunted hares, with no opportunity to discuss anything. Their unions, if they have been able to bring the unions in, will be shattered and years of building up wrecked overnight. The telegraph and the railway have enabled the government to make sure that only the smallest hiding places are safe from it.

A primitive organization like a Paris "section" of 1792 is like a primitive organism in the natural world—with few powers, but yet very hard to kill. Its influence was limited, but it was exceedingly difficult to prevent it immediately re-forming after a defeat. The British National Union of Railwaymen has far greater offensive power than the Section of the Cordeliers, but once defeated it would be very hard to build it up again. Modern conditions do not allow would-be revolutionaries to hang about and discuss their errors. In national wars decisions come slowly and after years of "war of attrition." There are no decisive sudden Waterloos. But in revolutionary battles the exact opposite is true: victory must be sudden or is irredeemably lost.

III

The latest of all examples of a proletarian insurrection occurred in Chile in 1932. Full details have not yet reached England, and those that have (such as the fact that the leaders of this Spanish-American revolt had Irish or Cornish names) are interesting rather than significant. But certain main lines of development are clear. Chile has long depended for its prosperity on the enormous deposits of nitrate in the North. A great corporation (Cosach),

largely financed from abroad, had secured control of its output. The usual effects of the slump were intensified here, by the discovery and exploitation of a method of artificially producing nitrate, which threatened ultimately to destroy the Chilean industry altogether.

The ruin of Chile became a byword even in Europe. The press printed stories of whole towns of 25,000 inhabitants being literally sold as "scrap" because the means of livelihood had forever departed from them. So complete a wreck and so sudden a decline from prosperity was bound to produce, and did produce, among the town working-class and the farmers the sort of revolutionary ferment that is summarily described as "Communist." (There was, in fact, no effective Communist Party in control.) This ferment extended to the army and particularly to the navy.

A short inspection of the map will show that Chile, far more than any other country in the world, not excepting Great Britain, is dependent on its navy. If the navy goes "red," one would say, the question is settled. Chile is a long thin strip of land, lying between the Andes and the sea. There is no single town of importance that cannot be blown off the map by naval guns. A government which tried to stand up to a rebel navy would have to take to the foothills, where it would starve in a month. So, one would have said, the revolt of the navy should have meant the success of the revolution. But it was suddenly shown that communications had advanced a step further since the end of the war. The government hedged for a minute, long enough to call up the air force. The airplanes descended upon the confident navy, bombed it from the air, rising and falling like birds of prey, and evading easily the clumsy showers of shrapnel from the anti-aircraft guns. Within a few

hours the navy had surrendered to one-twentieth of its numbers.

However, momentarily a happier ending was found. The revolutionaries promptly transferred their attention to the air force. The red flag which had been bombed off the ships was shortly floating over the airdromes. The aviators turned on the government. They started off, in motor bus and taxi, oddly enough, to inform the President that he was dismissed. The motor busses, according to the news reports, broke down and only a small delegation arrived to see the President.

He arose from his desk: "You are arrested," he said indignantly.

"On the contrary, señor," they replied politely, "you are deposed."

They explained to him the decision of the air force, and the hard truth enforced itself upon him.

Facing some half dozen travel-worn men, in a palace surrounded by loyal guards, he replied: "I surrender only to superior force: I shall go back to the farm."

Consequently, the red revolution was for the minute victorious, though ensuing events were far too confused, and far too ill-reported for us to draw any further lessons.

But suppose the air force had not been amenable? Suppose, as is quite conceivable in better established countries, the government had seen to it that the air force had only been recruited from the upper class? Then, so far from the revolution being victorious, we see opening before us the prospect of a country being wholly in the hands of a modern Praetorian Guard, which can slay its enemies from the air, and be immune from attack.

Let no one say, as answer to this: "The people cannot nowadays be held indefi-

nitely in subjection by force." This is an article of faith, an assumed axiom, which many people still believe; but it may simply enough be disposed of by asking, "Why not?" There is no reason. The powers of central authority are more colossal than ever they were before, and yet previous centuries are full of records of people submitting to the rule of force for vast periods of time. Socialists, republicans, liberals, atheists and scientists are only men with lives to save and wives and children to fear for. If force is concentrated in a small number of hands, and those hands use it ruthlessly enough, the discontented will abandon their opposition and remain silent. For the small minority that does not, there are large and modern prisons, and complaisant doctors who will readily certify "instability of mind."

The political police today has more resources than the Czars and there are few countries like the England and Switzerland of last century, willing to shelter all political refugees from some dim allegiance to a principle of liberty.

Nor does a Praetorian Guard, such as the Fascists led by airman Balbo or the Nazis led by airman Goering, content itself merely with its own irresistible force. Once in power, it sees to it that its victims like their subjection. No other but its own propaganda—directed in the crudest manner to glorifying both its leader's personality and the private army of black or brown shirts that it relies upon—is allowed to exist.

Men as a whole do not think connectedly and earnestly upon political subjects, and if only one set of ideas is legally permitted to appear before them, their opinions will be selected from that set and they will believe that they are exercising their free choice.

IV

Cauta est et ab illis incipit. How shall the cautious revolutionary who fears, or hopes, that in armed revolt lies his only chance of success, deal with this last development? The era of democracy began when the common archers shot down the noble knights of Agincourt and Crecy; has it ended when the gentlemanly air fighter can defeat both army and navy? How shall revolutionary feeling be spread among flying men?

There are three classes of aviators. There are, first, the officers and rank and file of the government air forces. Generally, actual flying is only undertaken by officers, who are poor material for any but Fascist propagandists, and though the ground force is more hopeful, its power is very small. But the organization of support in the air force for a revolutionary coup is an integral part of the whole problem of the armed forces—the navy, army and police; and will have to be considered separately.

We must turn to the second two classes. These are the civil pilots and the private owners. The civil pilots are obviously organizable, as other workers are, into trade unions, and indeed at one time some of them in Britain held trade union cards. Were the Trade Union movement in earnest in its desire for change, it would be organizing them at high pressure now. But even when this was done—and it should be done forthwith—they are very few though very skilled. The machines they operate are chiefly heavy craft, and in a conflict like a new Paris Commune could rapidly be put out of action by fighters. As for the private owners, it is certain that the great majority of them are idle and adventurous rich men and women who are more likely to carry out

raids against a struggling revolution than to fight for it. All that a revolutionary can say is that it is the obvious duty of any well-to-do and earnest advocate of social change not only to learn to fly himself but to pay for the training of at least one class-conscious and reliable worker.

That, indeed, is a duty which, like the organizing of a union of pilots, lies upon the most peaceful as well as the most ferocious of us. For all these methods of influencing the opinion of airmen are as important to a strictly constitutional as to an insurrectionary government. No government, however impeccable its origin and methods, dare leave this tremendous weapon in the hands of its class enemies. The air force may well be inimical to a reforming government; it must therefore, at the very least, be neutralized.

Enough has now been said to show that one weapon must be wholly rejected from the revolutionary arsenal. Direct armed revolt is no longer practical. But if that is true, it still does not mean that violence can or must be abandoned. Direct attack must fail, but indirect attack might succeed. Revolutionary propaganda could conceivably be turned like a jet upon the armed forces and the police, and it might be that concentration of energy here would prove a short cut to the revolution. Instead of us fighting the army, the army might fight for us. The tricks and deception of parliamentarism would be avoided and, after all, the method is one that has commended itself to everyone in the past except the Victorian Liberals, whose dominance lasted but a very short time in world history. Certainly, a man who imagines that men's opinions cease to count and should not be influenced or considered from the moment that they put on a uniform has a very fantastic view of politics.

Propaganda to this end is generally held to be illegal. The Communist International has always held this view, and in connection with it committed as early as 1920 one of its most serious blunders. It at that time published what amounted to the following short syllogism: "(a) propaganda in the armed forces is illegal; (b) it is also necessary for the revolution; therefore (c) we will admit no parties which do not promise forthwith to engage in illegal work." It acted, publicly, on that decision and made it binding on all constituent parties.

Consequently, it handed over all the Communist Parties outside Russia into the hands of the police whenever the police so chose to round them up. They had no legal defence, and for the sake of revolutionary pedantry had abandoned the immensely valuable privilege of dodging in and out of the defences of bourgeois law in their struggles with society. It may be necessary—indeed, very probably is—to break the law if you are earnestly intent on changing society. But one thing is quite certain, that if you propose to do so you should not announce the fact beforehand. No burglar calls the police when he is going burgling.

I would not be discussing this point at all if I did not believe that in England and the United States at least such propaganda is legal. It is perfectly legitimate to bring influence to bear upon the members of the armed forces in certain directions: it is even easy. The French and other revolutionaries have always forgotten a most important fact: that policemen and soldiers are chiefly working class in origin. They have assumed that the professional soldiers are their natural enemies and have consistently attacked them. Consequently, they have become their natural enemies and war is a standing condition.

But soldiers and policemen have wives, parents and sweethearts. These are of the working class and know the conditions of working class life and the sufferings that the present system causes. Their men who are in uniform cannot but be impressed by these facts, if only their relatives speak to them freely. They are, through the home, as susceptible as any others to the influence of the general economic causes that lead to revolutionary feeling. So much so is that the case that barrack life was instituted in the Eighteenth Century, not with any idea of military efficiency, but in order to remove the soldiers from "subversive" home influences and to make them more willing to shoot down the farmers evicted by the enclosures and the artisans starved by the industrial revolution.

Any government which was genuinely democratic and did in fact rely "upon the people" would reverse this decision and abandon the barrack system. It would give its army, navy and air force members the necessary training but allow them, like all other employed persons, to return home at nights. By such means alone could it secure that the armed forces would truly represent and defend the will of the people: this is the only means of preventing a Fascist coup or the domination of an officer-caste.

V

Whether or no barracks can be abolished, it is fairly sure that they are not very likely to be abolished with capitalist and nationalist governments in power; that is a reform which is only likely to come after the revolution. In the meantime, we must fall back on propaganda, and a fair survey of advanced anti-militarist propaganda up to date must force upon us the

conclusion that the greater portion of it is, from our present point of view, mere waste. Strict pacifist propaganda and strict Communist propaganda are equally ill-directed and up to date have been almost complete failures. This is so, because they take account of what the speaker believes to be absolute truth and not of what the audience is likely to be persuaded is true.

The revolutionary propagandists have failed utterly to follow the most important principle of modern advertising: that the customer is always right. Revolutionary propaganda addressed to the uniformed forces (or, for that matter, addressed to anybody) is merely sales-talk. The goods for sale are somewhat different from Listerine and Maiden-Form brassières, but the method of approach must be the same. The vendors of mouth-washes do not suggest that their customers are ill-fed, under-exercised, spotty and unwashed young men, who smell disgusting and repel everyone who comes near. They present pictures of tall, well-groomed, handsome upstanding youths who are with monstrous injustice suddenly afflicted by a visitation of bad breath which can be removed only by using their products.

Similarly, pacifists who tell the uniformed forces that war is an abominable crime and that they are no better than murderers, and Communists who tell them that they are "imperialist lackeys and butchers" have absolutely no chance of a hearing. What they say may be true, but their audience can never be expected to believe it. Even soldiers and policemen whose general attitude is friendly will look round upon their good-natured colleagues and find that they look like neither murderers nor imperialist lackeys (whatever that may mean). No considerable body of men can ever be convinced that its whole occupation is vile. It may, in circum-

stances, be convinced that it has been tricked and caused to do wrong things; that is as far as it will go. Men may be willing to admit they have been fools but not that they are knaves.

Any serious propaganda, therefore, must start by assuming that both soldiers and policemen perform useful functions and are not ignoble persons. It must differentiate between the various duties presented to them. It must agree at once to the valuable services of the police in traffic control, in running down murderers and stopping the drug traffic. It must admire their resistance to gangsters, and in particular their zeal in arresting booze barons and fraudulent financiers. It must stress the (presumed) desire of the average constable to protect the poor and needy; to aid the widow oppressed by rapacious landlords, to help home rather than arrest the proletarian who has celebrated Saturday night too well, to turn a blind eye to unfortunates who break a law by having nowhere to sleep.

It must declare its belief that the army exists only to repel a (hypothetical) predatory imperialist invader and would not consent to be used against its own countrymen. It must suggest to the army and the police that they are continually misused: that attacking the unemployed and hounding Communists are tasks which they should never have been asked to do—that, in fact, they are men of high character and courage who are continually misused and exploited by rich and greedy capitalists.

It must also be remembered that, like any other section of workers, uniformed workers will trust only those people who give real attention to their own special grievances, which vary from trade to trade. Labor members and trade union organizers, pamphleteers and reporters

should discover what these grievances are and seek steadily to get them removed. Policemen consider that they are deprived of elementary civil rights, such as the right of association, that their highest posts are reserved for imported military big shots, that their pay has been unjustly cut, and that their discipline is often harshly and unintelligently enforced. The army is treated even worse—soldiers have practically no rights under army law, are subjected to the rule of an absolutely alien caste, may be treated with personal violence and are regularly set to senseless and childish routine tasks to keep them occupied. These matters should be raised and continually agitated, not as part of a “Don’t shoot!” campaign, but as perfectly legal, parliamentary, constitutional agitation. At the same time, attention should be drawn to the class-character of enlistment to the high ranks and an endeavor made to make sure that the services are genuinely open to all classes alike.

VI

When all this has been done, have we any real reason to hope that the uniformed workers will lead and make the revolution for us? On the whole, probably not. Certainly, this has happened not infrequently in past history, and revolutions so made have not (contrary to general opinion) been the most bloody revolutions. But it has never happened at all, in any modern or highly organized state, except after a heavy defeat in war. The examples which occur to mind are Russia in 1917, Bavaria and Hungary in 1919, and France in 1871. There are no contrary examples whatever—no examples at all—of an army and navy after a victory or in time of peace, turning upon the authorities and carrying through a social revolution. There was

not ever a real Fascist "march on Rome"—before the blackshirt "heroes" started they made sure that the government in Rome had fallen into their power. And in these four examples, according to every account, the previous defeat of the army was the sole thing which made the revolt of the common soldier possible. It shattered his faith in the courage and honesty of his officers and made him think of them as enemies.

It is highly improbable, to say the least, that at any near date in the future the armed forces of Britain and the United States could be induced to *turn on* their officers. And if we offer ourselves the hope that they might at least decline to obey orders to shoot and stand aside during a revolutionary attack, then we are still comforting ourselves with pipe dreams. For, in order for such an abstention to be effective, it must be universal. If it is not, if an appreciable number of armed forces continue to resist, we are at once involved again in civil war, where chances of success, as we have seen, are slight.

We may surely at this point decide that the student of revolutionary technique must (subject, of course, to the appearance of extraordinary circumstances) conclude that armed revolt, as a method direct or indirect by a revolutionary élite or by a discontented army, is now totally impracticable.

Even to this statement, however, must be put a footnote. If his opponent holds most trumps, it still does not mean that the intelligent bridge player considers that all other suits are valueless. So, an economical and well-directed use of violence may be valuable. It is very difficult for anyone who is not opposed to its use on religious grounds to deny this. The relatively good position of the French working

class for example, after the war, was largely due to the fact that they had with reason secured the reputation of being dangerous people to meddle with. Very little else than the fear of exceedingly unpleasant personal experiences caused the French bourgeoisie to decide early to stabilize the franc at one-fifth of its pre-war value, which in effect meant that the cost of the war was to be taken out of middle-class savings instead of, as in England, out of the working class.

In America, the A.F. of L. unions, those paragons of respectability in theory, have all through their history made a judicious use of violence and frequently found that for individual unions it pays over quite long periods. All the world knows how when the London unemployed in the great hunger march of the last century smashed the club windows in Pall Mall the Lord Mayor's relief fund was trebled in a few hours. It may have been charity, but it looked like fear, and the money was welcome. As late as 1922 apparently aimless violence like the attack of the unemployed on the Islington Guardians had a very clear effect in forcing the continuance of the dole.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that this spasmodic and discreet violence has a strictly limited utility. Its use is confined by a formula similar to that which governs the use of the General Strike. If concession to it causes less discomfort to the ruling class than resisting it, it will be successful; if not, not. The governing class will give in as far as it is reasonable to expect it to give in to avoid a row. You could—and the unemployed have before now—get increased relief by what the papers call "ugly scenes." But you cannot secure a revolution by bluff. You cannot, I suspect, secure the nationalization of even one industry.

BOOM TOWN

BY THOMAS WOLFE

THROUGH the windows of the train he could see the flat, formless earth of New Jersey, loaded with its swarming weight of men and cities, with slum, swamp, and filthy tenement, with suburb and the ugliness of industry—cinder and yard and rust and waste, stubble and field and wood, steel and smoke-glazed glass and factory chimney, stroking forever past the moving windows into the infinite progressions of the stifled land. All through the early afternoon this flat uncharactered earth faded away into the powerful and weary hazes of the heat: the earth was parched and dusty looking, hot with coarse yellowed grasses and the withered stalks of flowerless weeds. Then, under a glazed and burning sky the train pounded down across the States of Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland, paused for forty minutes in the fading glow of a weary day at Washington, and towards dark slowly rumbled over the Potomac and entered the broad heat-stricken Commonwealth of Virginia. It was the end of June: already the weather had grown very hot and there had been no rain for weeks.

A gigantic panorama of a continent gasping for its breath unfolded as the train rushed on: everywhere within the hot green airless depth of the train and outside, at stations on the pauses of the journey, the talk was all of drought and heat: in great engines steaming slowly on the tracks, or passive as great cats, the engineers were wiping wads of blackened

waste across their grimy faces, the wilted passengers in other trains fanned feebly at their faces a sheaf of languid paper, or sat in a soaked and sweltering dejection.

All through the night he lay in his dark berth and watched, as he had watched so many times before, the old earth of Virginia as it stroked past him in the dream-haunted silence of the moon. Field and hill and gulch and stream and bridge and dreaming wood, then field and hill and gulch and stream and wood again, the old earth, the everlasting earth, the huge illimitable and unbounded earth of America, kept stroking past him in the steep silence of the moon.

All through the ghostly stillness of the land, the train made on forever its tremendous noise fused of a thousand sounds and haunted by the spell of time. And that sound evoked for him a million images: old songs, old faces and forgotten memories, and all strange, wordless, and unspoken things men know and live and feel, and never find a language for, the legend of dark time, the sad brevity of their days, the strange and bitter miracle of life itself. And through the thousand rhythms of this one design he heard again, as he had heard ten thousand times in childhood, the pounding wheel, the tolling bell, the whistle-wail. Far, faint and lonely as a dream, it came to him again through that huge spell of time and silence and the earth, evoking for him

as it had always done, its tongueless prophecy of life, its wild and secret cry of joy and pain, and its intolerable promises of the new lands, morning and a shining city.

But now the strange and lonely cry of the great train, which had haunted his whole life and which, far and faint from some green mountain valley of the South, had come to him so often as a child at night, bringing to him huge promises of flight and darkness, was speaking to him with an equal strangeness of return. For he was going home again. And sudden, blind, and furious as all his wonderings had been, was his return. He was going home again, and he did not know the reason for his going.

What was he looking for? What did he hope to find at home? He did not know. A restless wanderer, twenty-five years old, an obscure instructor at one of the universities in the city, a nameless atom in the terrific manswarm of the city's life, he was not by any standard which his native town could know—"successful," "a success." And more than anything, he feared the sharp, the appraising eye, the worldly judgments of that little town. Yet now he was returning to it. Why?

Suddenly, a memory of his years away from home, the years of wandering in many lands and cities, returned to him. He remembered how many times he had thought of home with such an intensity of passion that he could close his eyes and see the scheme of every street in town, and every house upon each street, and the faces of ten thousand people, as well as the memory of all their words, the densely woven fabric of all their histories.

Why had he felt so, thought so, remembered with such blazing accuracy,

if it had not mattered, and if, in the vast homeless unrest of his spirit, this little town, and the immortal hills around it, was not the only home he had on earth? He did not know. All that he knew was that the years flow by like water and that one day men come home again.

The train rushed onward through the moonlit land.

II

When he looked from the windows of the train the next morning the hills were there again: they towered immense and magical into the blue weather, and suddenly coolness was there, the winey sparkle of the air and the shining brightness, and it seemed to him that he had never left them and that all which had passed in the years between was like a dream.

Above him was the huge bulk of the hills, the looming shapes around him, the dense massed green of the wilderness, the cloven cuts and gulches of the mountain passes, the dizzy steepness, and the sudden drops below. He could see the little huts stuck to the edge of bank and gulch and hollow, set far below him in the gorges, toy-small, yet closer, nearer than a dream. All this, so far, so near, so strange and so familiar, refound like something we have always known and remembered, lost the instant that we find it, the everlasting stillness of the earth now meeting the intimate toiling slowness of the train as it climbed upward round the sinuous curves, was near and instant as a vision, more lost yet more familiar than his mother's face.

At last the train came sweeping down the long sloping bend into the suburban junction two miles from town, where his family always met him when he came

home. But even before the train had come to a full halt at the little station, he had looked out of the windows and seen with this same sense of instant recognition, the figures of his mother and his brother, waiting for him on the platform as he knew that he would find them.

He could see his brother, Lee, teetering restlessly from one flat foot to another as his glance went back and forth along the windows of the train in search of him. He could see his mother's strong short figure, planted solidly, her hands clasped across her waist in their loose and powerful grip, her white face with its delicately pursed mouth turned toward the windows of the train, her glance darting back and forth with the curious, startled, animal-like swiftness and intensity all her family had.

And even as he swung down from the car-steps of the Pullman and, valise in hand, strode towards the platform across the rock ballast of the roadbed and the powerful gleaming rails, he knew instantly, with this intuitive feeling of strangeness and recognition, just what they would say to him at the moment of their meeting.

Now his mother and his brother had seen him. He could see his mother speak excitedly to his brother, and motion towards him. And now his brother was coming towards him on the run, his broad clumsy hand extended in a gesture of welcome, his rich tenor shouting greetings at him as he came:

"How are you, boy?" he shouted. "Put it there!" he cried heartily as he came up and vigorously wrung him by the hand. "Glad to see you, John."

And still shouting greetings, he reached over and attempted to take the valise. The inevitable argument, vehement and protesting, began immediately, and in an-

other moment, as always, the older brother was in triumphant possession and the two were walking together towards the platform, Lee shouting scornfully all the time in answer to the other's protests: "Oh, for God's sake! Forget about it! I'll let you do as much for me when I come up to the Big Town to visit you! . . . Here's mama!" he said abruptly, as they came up on the platform. "I know she'll be glad to see you!"

She was waiting for him with the bridding and rather confused movement that was characteristic of her in moments of strong excitement. Her powerful and delicate mouth was smiling tremulously, her worn faded brown eyes were wet with the tears which the sight of a train and of someone arriving and departing always seemed to cause.

"Hello, mama," he said, somewhat thickly and excitedly. "How are you, mama?"

He hugged her hard, planting a clumsy kiss on her white face. In a moment they released each other, and his mother, holding his hand in her strong warm clasp, stepped back a pace and regarded him with the old tremulous, half bantering expression she had used so often when he was a child:

"Well, well, well!" she said. "Hm-m!" she said, making a little humming noise as she spoke. "My ba-aby!"

John reddened in the face, made an awkward and indefinite gesture, and could find nothing adequate to say. Then he looked quickly at his brother; for a moment they regarded each other with a tormented glance, then both began to grin at the same time, he sullenly, his brother with a wide, swiftly developing grin of wild exuberance, which suddenly split his handsome face with an idiotic and exultant glee. That wild grin was followed imme-

diately by the tremendous chortling of mad laughter, the huge "Whah—whah-h!—Haw-w!" his brother cried, smiting his forehead with the back of one clumsy hand. "My baby"—haw-w!" he cried again and smote himself. "God-damn!"

"Well, now, sonny boy," his mother now said briskly, "come on, now! I've got a good breakfast waiting for you when you get home!"

"How's Helen, mama," John broke in, somehow disturbed by the failure of his sister to meet him.

"Hah? What say? Helen?" she said quickly, in a sharp, surprised kind of tone. "Oh, she's all right. And yes, now! She called up before we left this morning and said to give you her love and tell you she'd be over later. Said she wanted to come along to meet you but had to stay at home because Roy McIntyre had 'phoned her he had a prospect for that place of theirs on Weaver Street and wanted to bring him over right away to look at it. Of course, she and Hugh are anxious to sell, want to move out there and build on one of those lots they own on Grovewood Terrace. Say they'll take eight thousand for the house—two thousand down, but I told her to take cash. I told her not to listen to Roy McIntyre if he tries to trade in on the deal any of those lots he's got up there on the hill in Ridgewood."

Here she gestured toward the hill that swept back in a slope of massed leafy green behind the railroad tracks, and with a short and almost convulsive tremor of her strong, pursed face, she shook her head in a movement of emphatic negation.

"Mamal!" Lee, who during the course of these remarks had been teetering restlessly back and forth on his large feet, thrusting his fingers through his flashing

hair in a distracted manner, and finally consulting his watch uneasily, now spoke in a tone of patient but somewhat strained courtesy:

"I think if we get started——"

"Why, yes!" she cried instantly in a tone of briskly cheerful but rather startled agreement. "That's the very thing. This very minute, sir! I'm ready any time you are! Come on!" and she started to move off with a confused and bristling movement of her strong frame.

"But as I say, now," she continued, quickly, now turning to John again, "I told her not to listen to him if he wants to swap. No, sir!" Here she shook her head emphatically. "I told her—if that's what he's trying to do I'd pay no attention to him for a minute! Hm!"—she shook her head with a little scornful smile—"That's what he was tryin' to get me to do. Why here, now! Yes! You see what he was up to, don't you? Why, didn't he try the very same trick on me? Didn't he come to me? Didn't he try to trade with me? Oh, here, along you know the first part of last April," she said impatiently with a dismissing gesture of her broad hand, as if all this splintered and explosive information must be perfectly clear to everyone—"with Dr. Gibbs, Rufe Mears, Erwin Featherstone, and all the rest of that crowd that's in with him. Says: 'I'll tell you what I'll do. We know you're a good trader, we respect your judgment, and we want you in,' he says, 'and just to have you with us, why, I'll trade you three fine lots I own up there on Pinecrest Road in Ridgewood for that house and lot you own on Preston Avenue.'

"Says: 'You won't have to put up a cent of your own money. Just to get you in with us I'll make an even swap with you!' 'Well,' I says——"

III

"Mama," John broke in desperately, stunned and bewildered by this mad obsession which had so completely filled and conquered her that everything else on earth—home, friends, children, absence and return, the whole chronicle of her life had been submerged and for the time forgotten:

"Mama," he began desperately again, but bewildered, not knowing what to say, "don't you think it would be better if . . ."

"Hah? What say?" Startled from that flood-tide of her obsession, she looked suddenly at him with the quick, instant attentiveness of a bird. "Well, as I say, you see now," she went on, seeing that he did not answer. "Said to him when they first came to me—Roy McIntyre, old Gibbs, and then of course, that's so—" she went on reflectively, "Rufe Mears was there as . . ."

"Couldn't we?" John blurted out with the blind confusion of a man who has suddenly come upon an undiscovered continent. "Why, couldn't we go home now, and eat our breakfast and then call up Helen—couldn't we—"

"Why, yes! The very thing! I'm ready, sir!"

"I think, mama," Lee now said gently with the tortured pleading, almost comic patience of exasperation, "I think that if we could—" and at this moment his tormented eyes suddenly met, stopped, rested for a moment on the astounded, bewildered look his brother gave him. For a minute they looked at each other with earnest, asking looks—then suddenly the bursting of wild glee upon his brother's face.

"Haw-w," Lee yelled, "haw-w," prodding his brother in the ribs, "*haw-w!*" he

cried. "You'll see—oh, you'll see, all right!" he gloated. "Frankly I have to laugh when I think about it. Frankly I do!" he said earnestly. Then looking at the astonished face before him, he burst out into the devastating roar again: "Haw-w! Whah-whah-h! You'll see," he said mysteriously and mockingly. "Oh, you'll get it now," he cried. "Nineteen hours a day, from daybreak to three o'clock in the morning—no holts barred!" he chortled. "They'll be waiting for us when we get there," he said. "They're all lined up there on the front porch in a reception committee to greet you and to cut your throat, every damn mountain grill of a real estate man in town. Old Horse Face Hines, the undertaker; Skin-em-alive Roy McIntyre; Skunk-eye Rufe Mears the demon promoter, and old squeeze-your-heart's-blood Gibbs, the widder and orphan man from Arkansas;—they're all there!" he said gloatingly. "She told 'em you're a prospect and they're waiting for you—every cut-throat swindler of a real estate man in town! It's your turn now!" he yelled. "She's told 'em that you're on the way and they're drawin' lots right now to see which one gets your shirt and which one takes the pants and B.V.D.'s. Haw-w! Whah-whah-h!" he poked his younger brother in the ribs.

"They'll get nothing out of me," John said angrily, "for I haven't got it to begin with."

"Haw-w! Whah-whah-h!" Lee yelled. "That doesn't matter. If you've got an extra collar button, they'll take that as the first instalment, and then and then—haw-w!—they'll collect your goddam cuff-links, socks, and your pants suspenders in easy instalments," he said gloatingly, "as the years roll on. Haw-w! *whah-h!*" he yelled, prodding his brother with clumsy fingers as he saw the sullen and

astounded look upon his face. Then, seeing his mother's white, pursed and reproving face, he suddenly prodded *her* in the ribs, at which she shrieked in a vexed manner and slapped at his rough hand.

"I'll vow, boy!" she cried fretfully. "What on earth's the matter with you? Why, you act like a regular idiot. I'll vow you do!"

"Haw! Whah-h!" he yelled again. Then, still grinning, he picked up the valise and started rapidly across the station platform towards his battered little car which was parked at the curb not more than twenty yards away.

And in this manner, accompanied every foot of the way by his mother's torrential discourse which gave him with encyclopaedic fullness the speculative history of every piece of real estate they passed, punctuated from time to time by his brother's rude prodding fingers in his ribs, the limitless and exultant madness of his great "whah-whah-h," the youthful native, after years of wandering, returned to his own town again—and found there a strange mad life, a glittering city, a wild and drunken fury he had never seen before.

IV

The streets were foaming with a mad exuberant life, crowded with a strange expensive traffic, with a thousand points of glittering machinery, winking and blazing imperially in the hot bright air, filled with new faces he had never seen. And the faces of the people he had known shone forth from time to time like a remembered door, like a street he had gone to once, or like lights in the enormous darkness of a lonely coast. And yet on the faces of everyone, natives and strangers alike, there was burning the drunken glow of an unholy glee. Their feet

swarmed and scampered on the pavements, their bodies darted, dodged, thrust and twisted as if the leaping energy of some powerful drug was driving them on. For the first time he witnessed the incredible spectacle of an entire population which was drunk—drunk on the same powerful liquors, drunk with an intoxication which never wore off and which never made them weary, dead, or sodden, but which drove them on constantly to new heights of leaping and scampering exuberance.

The people he had known all his life cried out to him along the streets, they seized his hand and shook it, saying, "Hi, there, boy! . . . Glad to see you home again! . . . Going to be with us for a while now? Good! I'll be seeing you, I've got to go on now, I've got to meet a fellow down the street to sign some papers! Glad to see you, boy!"—and they would vanish, having uttered this tempestuous greeting without a pause and without the loss of a stride, pulling and dragging him along with them as they wrung his hand.

The conversation was terrific and incessant—a tumult of voices united in variations of a single chorus: speculation and real estate. They were gathered in groups before the drug stores, before the post-office, along the curbs, before the court house and the city hall. They hurried along the pavements talking together with a passionate absorption of earnestness, bestowing a half-abstracted nod of greeting from time to time on some acquaintance who was passing. The real estate men were everywhere. Their motors and buses roared through all the streets of the town and out into the country, bearing crowds of prospective clients. One could see them on the porches of houses unfolding blue-prints and prospectuses as they shouted

enticements and promises of sudden wealth into the ears of deaf old women. Everyone was game for them—the lame, the halt and the blind, Civil War veterans or their decrepit pensioned widows, as well as high school boys and girls, Negro truck drivers, soda-jerkers, elevator-boys, boot-blacks.

Everyone bought real estate; and everyone was a “real estate man” either in name or practice. The barbers, the lawyers, the grocers and butchers and builders and clothiers were all engaged now in a single interest, a common obsession. And there seemed to be only one rule, a dominant and infallible law—to buy, always to buy, to pay whatever price was asked and to sell again within two days at whatever price one chose to fix. It was fantastic: within the town, along any of its streets, the property was being sold by the inch, the foot—thousands of dollars were being paid for each front foot of earth along these streets, and when the supply of streets was exhausted, new streets were created feverishly, and even before these streets were paved or a house had been built upon them the land was being sold by the inch, the foot, for hundreds and thousands of dollars.

A spirit of drunken waste and wild destructiveness was everywhere apparent: the fairest places in the town were mutilated at a cost of millions of dollars. In the centre of town, for instance, there was a beautiful green hill, opulent with rich lawn and lordly trees, with beds of flowers and banks of honeysuckle, and surmounted with an immense rambling old wooden hotel. It was a glorious old place which was a labyrinth of wings and corridors, of great parlors, porches, halls and courts, which had for forty years been the most delightful place in town, and from which as lovely and

magical a landscape as the earth can offer—the vast panorama of the ranges of the “Smokies”—could be seen. Now they advanced upon this enchanted hill.

John could remember the immense and rambling old hotel with its wide porches and comfortable rockers, its countless eaves and gables, elfin, Gothic, capricious and fantastic, the thick red carpets of the wide corridors, and the old lobby, a place of old red leather hollowed and shaped by the backs of men, of the smells of tobacco and the iced tinkle of tall drinks. It had a splendid mellow dining-room filled with laughter and quiet voices, and unctuous expert niggers, bending and scraping and chuckling with glee over the jokes of the rich men from the North as with a prayerful grace they served them delicious foods out of old silver dishes.

He could remember all these things as well as the tender or smiling looks and glances of the glorious women, the rich men’s wives and daughters. And he would be touched with the unutterable mystery of all these things—of beauty and wealth and fame, and of these splendid travelers who had come great distances, who brought with them somehow a marvelous evocation of the whole golden and unvisited world, with its thousand fabulous cities and with all its proud, passionate song of glory, fame and love.

Now this was gone: an army of men and shovels had advanced upon this great green hill and leveled it down to an ugly mound of clay, and they had paved that clay with a desolate horror of hard white concrete, they had built stores and garages and office buildings and parking spaces—raw and new—and they had built a new hotel where the old one was. It was a structure of sixteen stories of pressed brick and concrete, harsh and sharp and raw, which seemed to have

been stamped out of the same mold as a thousand others throughout the country by some gigantic biscuit-cutter of hotels, and which was called, sumptuously, the Ritz-Altamont.

V

Suddenly, one day, in the midst of all this glittering tumult, he met Robert Weaver, a classmate at college, and a boyhood friend. He came down the thronging street swiftly at his anxious lunging stride, and immediately, without a word of greeting, broke hoarsely into the abrupt and fragmentary speech that had always been characteristic of him, but that now in the pulsing stimulation of this atmosphere, seemed feverishly emphasized.

"When did you get here? . . . How long are you going to stay? . . . What do you think of the way things look here?" Then, without waiting for an answer, he demanded with a brusque, challenging and almost impatient scornfulness: "Well, what do you intend to do—be a two-thousand-dollar-a-year school-teacher all your life?"

The contemptuous tone with its implication of superiority—an implication which among this swarm of excited people big with their importance of imagined achievement and great wealth he had felt keenly since his return—now stung John to retort sharply:

"There are worse things than teaching school! Being a paper millionaire is one of them! As for the two thousand dollars a year, you really get it, Robert. It's not real estate money, it's money you can spend. You can buy a ham sandwich with it."

He laughed sharply. "You're right!" he said. "I don't blame you. It's the truth!" He began to shake his head slowly. "Lord, Lord!" he said. "They've all gone clean

out of their heads here . . . Never saw anything like it in my life . . . Why, they're all crazy as a loon," he swore. "You can't talk to them . . . You can't reason with them . . . They won't listen to you . . . They're getting prices for property here you couldn't get in New York."

"Are they *getting* it?"

"Well," he said, with a falsetto laugh, "they get the first five hundred dollars . . . You pay the next five hundred thousand on time."

"How much time?"

"God!" he said, "I don't know . . . All you want, I reckon . . . Forever! . . . It doesn't matter . . . You sell it next day for a million."

"On time?"

"That's it!" he cried, laughing. "You make a half million just like that."

"On time?"

"You've got it!" said Robert. "On time . . . God! Crazy, crazy, crazy," he kept laughing and shaking his head. "That's the way they make it," he said.

"Are you making it, too?"

His manner at once became feverishly earnest and excited: "Why, it's the damndest thing you ever heard of!" he said. "I'm raking it in hand over fist! . . . Made three hundred thousand dollars in the last two months . . . Why, it's the truth! . . . Made a trade yesterday and turned around and sold the lot again not two hours later. . . . Fifty thousand dollars just like that!" he snapped his fingers. "Does your mother want to sell that house on Spring Street? . . . Have you talked to her about it? . . . Would she consider an offer?"

"Yes, if she gets enough."

"How much does she want?" he demanded impatiently. "Would she take two hundred and fifty thousand?"

"Could you get it for her?"

"I could get it within twenty-four hours," he said. "I know a man who'd snap it up in five minutes . . . I'll tell you what I'll do, John, if you persuade her to sell, I'll split the commission with you . . . I'll give you five thousand dollars."

"All right, Robert, it's a go. Could you let me have fifty cents on account?"

"Do you think she'll sell?" he said feverishly.

"I don't think so. I think she's going to hold on."

"Hold on! What's she going to hold on for? Now's the time when things are at the peak. She'll never get a better offer!"

"I know, but we're expecting to strike oil out in the backyard at any time now."

At this moment there was a brilliant disturbance among the tides of traffic in the street. A magnificent motor car detached itself from the stream of humbler vehicles and crawled in swiftly to the curb where it came to a smooth stop—a panther of opulent machinery, a glitter of nickel, glass and burnished steel. From it, a gaudily attired creature stepped down to the pavement with an air of princely indolence, tucked a light malacca cane carelessly under its right arm-pit, and slowly and fastidiously withdrew from its nicotined fingers a pair of lemon gloves, at the same time saying to the liveried driver: "You may go, James. Call for me again in hal-luf an houah!"

The creature's face was thin, sunken, and as swarthy as a Mexican's; its coal black eyes glittered with the unnatural fires of the drug addict; its toothless jaws had been so bountifully furnished forth with a set of glittering false teeth that they now grinned and clattered at the world with the prognathous bleakness of a skeleton. The whole figure, although

heavy and shambling, had a caved-in and tottering appearance that suggested a stupendous debauchery. It moved forward with its false bleak grin, leaning heavily upon the stick, and suddenly John recognized that native ruin which had been known to him since childhood as Rufus—or Rufe—Mears.

VI

J. Rufus Mears—the "J" was a recent and completely arbitrary addition of his own, fitting in, no doubt, with his ideas of financial and personal grandeur, and matching the dizzy pinnacle at the summit of the town's affairs on which he was now perched—was the black sheep of a worthy and industrious family in the community.

From the beginning, Rufe's career had been lurid, capricious and disgraceful. A dark and corrupt energy was boiling ceaselessly within him to wrest a living and quick wealth from life in some shady or precarious fashion. He was haunted constantly by the apparition of "easy money." On one occasion he had been sentenced to a term in jail for operating gambling machines; on another he had been sent to the chain gang for running a "blind-tiger"; on yet another, he had got into serious difficulties when he began to tour the small towns in the district with a burlesque musical show, the chorus of which had been recruited from ignorant girls in the neighborhood who had had no experience in the theatre whatever and were lured into the unsavory enterprise by Rufe's plausible dark tongue.

In recent years, his physical and mental disintegration had been marked; he had become an addict of cocaine and his swarthy eyes usually burned with a fever-

ish drugged glitter. It was well known that he was no longer mentally responsible for his acts. He had spent several other terms in prison and once, after having telegraphed to the morning newspaper a thrilling and moving account of his death by violence in another city, he had been sent for a period to the State asylum for the insane.

This was Rufe Mears as John remembered him, and as all of them had seen and known him, and who now stood here before them in the fantastic trappings of a clown of royalty, the visible and supreme embodiment of their unbelievable and extravagant madness. For, like gamblers who will stake a fortune on some moment's whimsy of belief or superstition, thrusting their money in a stranger's hand and bidding him to play with it because the color of his eye is lucky, or as race track men will rub the hump upon a cripple's back to bring them luck, the people of the town now listened prayerfully to every word that Rufus Mears might utter. They greedily sought his opinion in all their staggering speculations and they acted instantly on his suggestion or command. He had become—in what way, for what reason, upon what proof of competence no one knew—the high priest and prophet of this insanity of waste.

They knew that he was witless, that he was criminal, that he was drugged, diseased and broken, but they used him as men once used divining rods, they deferred to him as people in Russia were said to have deferred to idiots in the village—with an absolute and incredible faith that some divine power of intuition in him made all his judgments infallible. It was this creature who now stood before them, on whom already the respectful gaze of the passersby was directed,

and to whom Robert now turned with a movement of feverish eagerness, saying to John abruptly and peremptorily as he left him: "Wait a minute . . . I've got to speak to Rufe Mears about something . . . Wait till I come back."

John watched the astounding scene—Rufe Mears, still drawing the gloves off his stained and yellowed fingers with that movement of bored casualness, walked slowly over toward the entrance to the drug store, while Robert, in an attitude of obsequious entreaty, kept at his elbow, bent his tall stiff form toward him, and hoarsely and abruptly poured a torrent of frenzied interrogation of which John could hear glittering fragments: ". . . Property in West Altamont . . . Seventy-five thousand dollars . . . Option expires tomorrow at noon . . . John Ingram has the piece above mine . . . Won't sell. . . Holding for hundred fifty . . . Mine's the best location . . . But Fred Bynum says too far from main road. . . What do you think, Rufe? . . . Is it worth it?"

During the course of this torrential appeal Rufe Mears did not even once turn to look at his petitioner. In fact, he gave no evidence whatever that he was paying the slightest attention to what Robert was saying. Instead, he finished taking off his gloves, thrust them in his pocket, cast his glittering eye feverishly around in a series of disordered glances, and suddenly grew rigid, shuddered convulsively, and began to root into himself violently with a clutching, thrusting hand. This operation completed, he shuddered once again and, like a man who is just coming out of a trance, seemed for the first time to become aware that Robert was waiting in an attitude of prayerful entreaty.

"What's that? What did you say, Robert," he said rapidly in his dark

drugged tone. "How much did they offer you for it? . . . Don't sell . . . Don't sell!" he said suddenly and with violent emphasis. "Now is the time to buy, not to sell . . . The trend is upwards . . . Buy! . . . Buy! . . . Don't take it . . . Don't sell. . . That's my advice!"

"I'm not selling, Rufe," Robert cried excitedly, "I'm thinking of buying."

"Oh yes, yes, yes!" Rufe muttered rapidly. "I see, I see . . ." He turned abruptly for the first time and fixed his glittering eye upon his questioner. "Where did you say it was?" he demanded sharply. "Rosemont. . . . Good. . . . Good! . . . Can't go wrong! Buy! Buy!"

Suddenly he started to walk away into the drug store; the lounging idlers split obsequiously. Robert rushed after him frantically, and caught him by the arm, shouting, "No, no, Rufe! It's not Rosemont! It's the other way . . . I've been telling you . . . It's West Altamont!"

"What's that?" Rufe cried sharply, "West Altamont . . . Why didn't you say so? . . . That's different! Buy! Buy! . . . Can't go wrong! . . . Whole town's moving in that direction . . . Values double out there in six months . . . how much do they want?"

"Seventy-five thousand," Robert panted. "Option expires tomorrow . . . Five years to pay it up . . . The old Buckner place, only fifteen minutes away!"

"Buy! Buy!" Rufe barked, and began to walk away into the store at a lunging and disjointed step, as if his legs would fly away below him at any moment.

Robert turned and strode back toward John, his eyes blazing with excitement, his every stride and gesture a fierce interrogation.

"Did you hear him? Did you hear what he said?" he demanded hoarsely. "You heard him, didn't you? . . . Best

damned judge of real estate that ever lived . . . Never known to make a mistake! . . . Buy! Buy! . . . Will double in value in six months . . . You were standing right here?" he said hoarsely and accusingly, glaring at him. "You heard what he said, didn't you?"

"Yes. I heard him."

Robert glanced wildly and confusedly about him, passed his hand feverishly through his hair several times, and then said, sighing heavily and shaking his head in a movement of astonished wonderment: "Seventy-five thousand dollars' profit in one deal! . . . Never heard anything like it in my life! . . . Lord, Lord!" he cried, "What are we coming to?"

VII

On Sunday afternoon, the mother and her two sons drove out to the only plot of land in town which had been preserved from the furious invasions of the real estate men. This was the cemetery, where all the members of their family who had died, were buried.

On the way out, as they drove through the streets of the town, the mother, who was sitting in the back seat of the car, kept up a constant, panoramic, and exhaustive commentary on the speculative history of every piece of property they passed. She talked incessantly about real estate, pausing from time to time to nod deliberately to herself in a movement of strong affirmation, gesturing briefly and casually with her strong wide hand, and meditating her speech frequently with the strong lips of deliberative silence.

"You see, don't you?" she said, nodding slowly to herself with a movement of conviction, and tranquilly indifferent whether they listened or not so long as the puppets of an audience were before her. "You see

what they're goin' to do here, don't you? Why, Fred Arthur, Roy McIntyre and Dr. Gibbs—all that crowd—why, yes—here! Say!" she cried, frowning meditatively. "Wasn't I reading it? Didn't it all come out in the paper—why, here, you know, a week or two ago—how they proposed to tear down that whole block of buildings there and were going to put up the finest garage in this part of the country. Oh! say, it will take up the whole block, you know, with a fine eight-story building over it, with storage space upstairs for more cars, and doctors' offices—why, yes! they're even thinking of puttin' in a roof garden and a big restaurant on top. Say, the whole thing will cost 'em over a half million dollars before they're done with it—oh, paid two thousand dollars a foot for every inch of it!" she cried. "But pshaw! Why, those are Main Street prices—you can get business property up in town for *that*!—I could have told him—but H'm!"—again the scornful little tremor of the head—"He'll never do it—no, sir! He'll be lucky if he gets out with his skin!"

Near the cemetery they passed a place beside the road where an unpaved road of clay went upwards among fields towards some lonely pines. The place beside the road was flanked by two portaled shapes of hewn granite blocks set there like markers of a splendid city yet unbuilt which would rise grandly from the hills that swept back into the green wilderness from the river—this and a large sign planted in the field was all.

But even as they passed by this loneliness of field and pine and waning light, they read some words upon the sign. The large word on the top was RIVERCREST—and down below they saw in small letters the word "Dedicated."

"Hah? What say?" she cried out in a

sharply startled tone. "What does it say below? Dedicated?"

"Wait a minute!" Lee cried abruptly, jamming his large flat foot into the brake so violently that they were flung forward with a stunning jolt. They halted with a jarring skid, and peered out at the letters on the sign:

RIVERCREST

Dedicated to All the People of This
Section and to the Glory of the Greater
City They Will Build.

They read the words in silence for a moment, and then she repeated them slowly and with obvious satisfaction. "Ah-hah!" she said, nodding her head slowly with deliberate agreement, "that's just exactly it!" Then they started to move on again.

"Dedicated!" Lee muttered to himself. "Dedicated to all the people of this section" he muttered distractedly, pushing his clumsy fingers through his hair. "To the glory of the Greater City they will build. . . . Uh-huh! Ah-hah!" he sang out madly. "Dedicated! . . . Now ain't that nice," he said slowly, and in a tone of mincing and delicate refinement. "Dedicated to the service of all the people of this section." The crazy grin split wide and sudden on his handsome face. "*Haw-w!*" he yelled suddenly and smote himself upon the temple with the heel of his large clumsy hand. "Dedicated to cutting your goddamn throat and bleeding you white of every nickel that you've got. Dedicated! Haw-w! Whah-*whah!*"

When they got to the cemetery they drove slowly in around a circling road and at length came to a halt on the rounded crest of the hill where the family burial lot was situated. It was a good lot—perhaps the best one on the hill—and it looked out across the deep dense green

of the wooded slopes and hollows towards the central business part of town. The ramparts, spires, and buildings of the town, the old ones as well as the splendid new ones—the hotels, office buildings, garages, and arcades and concrete squares of boom development which exploded from the old design with glittering violence—were plainly visible. It was a fine view.

For a moment, after getting out of the car, the mother stood looking at the burial lot, her strong hands loosely clasped across her waist. Then shaking her head rapidly with a pursed mouth of depreciation and regret, she said: "Hm! Hm! Hm! Too bad, too bad, too bad!"

"What's that, mama?" Lee said. "What's too bad?"

"Why, that they should have ever chosen such a place as this for the cemetery," she said regretfully. "Why, as I told Frank Candler just the other day, they've gone and deliberately given away the two best building sites in town to the niggers and the dead people! That's just exactly what they've done! I've always said as much—that the two finest building sites in town for natural beauty are Nigger-town and Riverview Cemetery. I could have told them that long years ago—they should have known as much themselves if any of them could have seen an inch beyond his nose—that someday the town would grow up and this would be valuable property! Why, why on earth! When they were lookin' for a cemetery site—why on earth didn't they think of findin' one across the river, up there on Patton Hill, say, where you get a beautiful view—out of town somewhere, where property is not so valuable? But *this*!" she cried. "This by rights is *building* property! People could have fine homes here! And as for the niggers, I've always said that

they'd have been better off if they were put down there on those old flats in the depot section! Now it's too late, of course,—nothin' can be done—but it was certainly a grave mistake," she said, and shook her head. "I've always known it."

"Well, I guess you're right," Lee muttered absently. "I never thought of it before, but I guess you're right."

"And to think," the mother went on in a moment, with that curious fragmentary semblance of irrelevance which was not irrelevant at all, "—and to think that he would go and move her—to think that any man could be so hard-hearted as to—o-oh!" She shuddered with a brief convulsive pucker of revulsion. "It makes my blood run cold to think of it—and I told him so! I told him so!—to think he would have no more mercy in him than to go and move her from the place where she lay buried."

"Why, who was that, mama?" Lee said absently. "Move who?"

"Why, Lydia, of course, child!" she said impatiently, gesturing briefly to the old and weather-rusted stone beneath which her husband's first wife lay buried. "That's the thing that started all this moving! We'd never have thought of coming here if it hadn't been for Lydia!—And here," she cried fretfully, "the woman had been dead and in her grave more than a year when he gets this notion in his head he's got to move her—and you couldn't reason with him! You couldn't argue with him!" she cried with vehement surprise. "I tried to talk to him about it but it was like talking to a stone wall—no, sir!" Here, with a movement of strong decision, she shook her head. "He'd made up his mind, he was *determined*—and he wouldn't budge from it an inch! . . . 'But see here, man,' I said. 'The thing's not right!—The woman ought to stay

where she's buried!' I didn't like the look of it! 'Even the dead have got their rights,' I said—"again the powerful, short tremor of the face—" 'Where the tree falls there let it lie!'—but no! he wouldn't listen, you couldn't talk to him. He says, 'I'll move her if it's the last thing I ever live to do! I'll move her if I have to dig her up myself and carry the coffin on my back to Riverview—but that's where she's going, and you needn't argue any more!' Well, I saw then that he had his mind made up and that it wouldn't do any good to talk to him about it. But oh! an awful mistake, an *awful* mistake!" she muttered with the powerful short movement of the head—"all that moving and expense for nothing—if he'd felt that way, he should have gone to Riverview in the beginning when she died—but that's when he bought this lot, all right," she now said tranquilly—"And that's the reason that the rest of them are buried here. That's how it was, all right," she said, "but I've always regretted it! I was against it from the start."

And for a moment she was silent, looking with the contemplation of a grave-eyed memory at the weather-rusted stone.

"Well, as I say, then," she went on calmly, "when I saw he had his mind made up, and that there was no use to try to change him—Well, I went out to the old cemetery the day they moved her—oh! one of those raw windy days you get in March! The very kind of day she died on. And old Mrs. Wrenn and Amy Williamson—of course, they had both been good friends of Lydia's—they went along, too. And, of course, when we got out there, they were curious, they wanted to have a look, you know," she went on calmly, describing this grisly desire with no surprise whatever, "and they tried to get me to take a look at it, too.

'No', I said, 'You go on and satisfy your curiosity if that's what you want to do, but I won't look at it!' I said, 'I'd rather remember her the way she was.' Well, they went ahead and did it, then. They got old Prov—you know, he was that old nigger man that worked for us—to open up the coffin, and I turned my back and walked away a little piece until they got through lookin'," she said tranquilly, "and pretty soon, I heard them comin'. Well, I turned around and looked at them, and let me tell you something," she said gravely, "their faces were a study! Oh, they turned pale and they trembled. 'Well, are you satisfied?' I said. 'Did you find what you were lookin' for?' 'Oh-h,' says old Mrs. Wrenn, pale as a ghost, shakin' and wringin' her hands, you know, 'Oh, Delia,' she says, 'it was awful! I'm sorry that I looked,' she said.

" 'Ah-hah!' I says, 'What did I tell you? You see, don't you?' Says, 'Oh-h, it was all gone—all gone—all rotted away to nothing so you couldn't recognize her. The face was all gone until you could see the teeth—and the nails had all grown out long—but Delia!' she says, 'the hair!—the hair!—oh, I tell you what,' she says, 'the hair was beautiful! It had grown out until it covered everything—the finest head of hair I ever saw on anyone. But the rest of it—oh! I'm sorry that I looked!' she says. 'Well, I thought so! I thought so!' I said, 'I knew you'd be sorry, so I wouldn't look!'—But that's the way it was all right," she concluded with the tranquil satisfaction of omniscience.

VIII

At one corner of the burial lot a tall locust tree was growing: its pleasant shade was divided between the family lot and the adjacent one where members of

the mother's family, the Pentlands, had been buried. The grave-stones in the family lot (which was set on a gentle slope) were arranged in two parallel rows. In the first row were buried John's brothers, Arthur McFarlane Hawke and Edward Madison Hawke, who were twins: also his mother's first child, Margaret Ann.

Facing these was the family monument. It was a square massive chunk of gray metallic granite, brilliantly burnished, one of the finest and most imposing monuments in the cemetery. It bore the family name in raised letters upon its shining surface, and on each end were inscriptions for his father and his mother. His father was buried at the end of the monument which faced the town. His inscription read: "William Oliver Hawke—Born near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, April 16, 1851—Died, Altamont, Old Catawba, June 21, 1922." The mother's inscription was at the other end of the monument, facing her own people, and read: "Delia Elizabeth Hawke—nee Pentland—Born at the Forks of Ivy, Old Catawba, February 16, 1860—Died —."

All of the monuments, save his father's and mother's, had in addition to the name and birth and death inscriptions, a little elegiac poem, carved in a fine italicized script, and reading somewhat as follows:

Still is the voice we knew so well
Vanished the face we love
Flown his spirit pure to dwell
With angels up above.
Ours is the sorrow, ours the pain
And ours the joy alone
To clasp him in our arms again
In heaven by God's throne.

In the drowsy waning light of the late afternoon, John could see people moving slowly across the great hill of the dead, among the graves and monuments of

other burial lots. The place had the brooding hush a cemetery has on a summer day, and in the fading light even the figures of the people had a dream-like and almost phantasmal quality as they moved about.

The mother stood surveying the scene reflectively, her hands held at the waist in their loose strong clasp. She looked at the grave-stones in the family lot, reading the little elegiac verses, and although she had read these banal phrases a thousand times, she did so again with immense satisfaction, framing the words with her lips and then nodding her head slowly and deliberately in a movement of emphatic affirmation, as if to say: "Ah-hah! That's it exactly!"

For a moment longer, she stood looking at the stones. Then she went over to Ed's grave, picked up a wreath of laurel leaves which someone had left there a few weeks before, and which had already grown withered and faded looking, and set it at the head of the grave against the base of the stone. Then, she moved about among the graves, bending with a blunt, strong movement and weeding out tufts of the coarse grass which had grown weedly about the bases of some of the monuments.

When she had finished, she stood looking down at Margaret's stone which was weathered, stained and rusty looking. She read the inscription of the old faded letters, and then turning to her youngest son, spoke quietly:

"This morning at eight o'clock, thirty-nine years ago, I lost the first child that I ever had. Your sister Margaret died today—July the fourteenth—four days less than nine months old. She was the most perfect baby I ever saw—the brightest and most sensible child for her age." And again she nodded her head slowly

and deliberately, in a movement of powerful affirmation.

"Time went on, I had the other children, kept my hands full, and to a certain degree," she said reflectively, "kept my mind off sorrow. No time for sorrow!" cried the mother, with the strong convulsive tremor of the head. "Too much to do for sorrow! . . . Then, when years had passed, the hardest blow of all fell. Arthur was taken. It seemed I had given up all. Could have borne as well if all the others had been taken! I can't understand why!" And for a moment her brown worn eyes were wet. "But it had grown a part of me—felt somehow that he was to lead the others, and when I realized that he was gone, it seemed that everything was lost.

"I never got to know Ed," she said quietly. "I always wanted to talk to him, but could not. I felt a part of him was gone—maybe he felt so, too. It was hard to give Ed up, but I had suffered the first great loss in giving up his twin, the other part."

She paused, looking down at the two tombstones for a moment, and then said gravely and proudly: "I believe that they have joined each other and if they are happy I'll be reconciled. I believe I'll meet them in a Higher Sphere, along with all the members of our family—all happy, and all leading a new life."

She was silent for another moment, and then, with a movement of strong decision, she turned away and looked out towards the town where already the evening lights were going on, were burning hard and bright and steady in the dusk.

"Come now, my sonny boys!" she cried briskly and cheerfully, "It's getting dark and there are people waiting for us.

"Son," she said, laying her broad hand on John's shoulder in a warm, strong

and easy gesture, and speaking in the old half-bantering manner that she had used so often when he was a child, "I've been a long time livin' on this earth and, as the fellow says, the world do move! You've got your life ahead of you, and lots to learn and many things to do—but let me tell you something, boy!" and for a moment she looked at him in a sudden, straight and deadly fashion, with a faint smile round the edges of her mouth. "Go out and see the world, and get your fill of wanderin', and then," she cried, "come back and tell me if you've found a better place than home! I've seen great changes in my time, and I'll see many more before I die, and there are great things yet in store for us—great progress, great inventions, it will all come true. Perhaps I'll not live to see it, but you *will*! We've got a fine town here and we've fine people here to make it go—and we're not done yet. I've seen it all grow up out of a country village—and some day we will have a great city here."

IX

A great city? These words, he knew, had come straight from his mother's heart, from all the invincible faith of her brave spirit which had endured the anguish, grief and suffering of a hundred lives and which would never change. That unshaken spirit would, he knew, face towards the future to the last hour of its life with this same unyielding confidence, and would be triumphant over all the ruinous error and mischance of life. And for her, he knew, this "great city" that she spoke of now was the city of her heart, her faith, her spirit—the city of the everlasting future, and her quenchless hope, the fortunate, good and happy life that some day, she was sure, would

be found here on the earth for all men living.

But of that other city, this glittering and explosive shape of man's destructive fury which now stood sharply in their vision in the evening light—what did the future hold for that place and its people? In this strange and savage hunger for what they had spoken of as a better life, a greater city, in this delirium of intoxication which drove them on, there was really a fatal and desperate quality, as if what they hungered for was ruin and death. It seemed to him that they were ruined: it seemed that even when they laughed and shouted and smote one another on the back, the knowledge of their ruin was in them—and they did not care, they were drunk and mad and amorous of death.

But under all their flash and play of life, the paucity of their designs—the starved meagerness of their lives—was already apparent to them. The better life resolved itself into a few sterile and baffled gestures—they built an ugly and expensive house and bought a car and joined a country club; they built a larger, uglier and more expensive house, a more expensive car and joined a larger and more expensive country club—they pursued this routine through all the repetitions of an idiot monotony, building new houses, new streets, new country clubs with a frenzied haste, a wild extravagance, but nowhere was there food to feed their hunger, drink to assuage their thirst. They were stricken and lost, starved squirrels chasing furiously the treadmill of a revolving cage, and they saw it, and they knew it.

A wave of ruinous and destructive energy had welled up in them—they had squandered fabulous sums in meaningless streets and bridges, they had torn down the ancient public buildings, court house

and city hall, and erected new ones, fifteen stories tall and large enough to fill the needs of a city of a million people; they had levelled hills and bored through mountains, building magnificent tunnels paved with double roadways and glittering with shining tiles—tunnels which leaped out on the other side into Arcadian wilderness. It was mad, infuriate, ruinous; they had flung away the earnings of a life-time and mortgaged those of a generation to come; they had ruined themselves, their children, and their city, and nothing could be done to stop them.

Already the town had passed from their possession, they no longer owned it, it was mortgaged under a debt of fifty million dollars, owned by bonding companies in the North. The very streets they walked on had been sold beneath their feet—and still they bought, bought, bought, signing their names to papers calling for the payment of a king's ransom for forty feet of earth, reselling the next day to other mad men who signed away their lives with the same careless magnificence. On paper, their profits were fabulous, but their "boom" was already over and they would not see it. They were staggering below obligations to pay that none of them could meet—and still they bought.

And then, when it seemed that they had exhausted all the possibilities of ruin and extravagance in town, they had rushed out into the wilderness, into the calm eternity of the hills, into lyrical immensities of wild earth where there was land enough for all men living, where any man could take as much earth as he needed, and they had madly staked off little plots and wedges of the wilderness, as one might try to stake a picket fence out in the middle of the ocean. They had given fancy names to all their plots and

stakings — “Wild Boulders” — “Shady Acres”—“Eagle’s Crest.” They set prices to an acre of the wilderness that might have bought a mountain, and made charts and drawings, showing populous and glittering communities of shops, houses, streets, roads and clubs in regions where there was no road, no street, no house, and which could not be reached in any way save by a group of resolute and desperate pioneers armed with axes, or by an airplane.

These places were to be transformed into idyllic colonies for artists and critics and writers—all the artists and critics and writers in the nation—and there were colonies as well for preachers, doctors, actors, dancers, golf-players, and retired locomotive engineers. There were colonies for everyone, and what is more, they sold them!

It was the month of July, 1929—that fatal year which brought ruin to millions of people all over the country. They were now drunk with an imagined victory, pressing and shouting in the dusty tumult of the battle, most beaten where they thought their triumph was the greatest, so that the desolate and barren panorama of their ruin would not be clearly known to them for several years to come.

X

And now, as John stood there looking at this new strange town, this incredible explosion of a town which had gone mad and frenzied over night, he suddenly remembered the barren night-time streets of the town he had known so well in his childhood. The gaunt pattern of their dreary and unpeopled desolation had burned its acid print upon his memory. Bare, wintry and deserted—by ten o’clock at night those streets had been an aching

monotony and weariness of hard lights and empty pavements, a frozen torpor broken only occasionally by the footfalls of some prowler of the night, by desperate, famished lonely men who hoped past hope and past belief for some haven of comfort, warmth and love there in the wilderness, for the sudden opening of a magic door into some secret, rich and more exultant life. They never found it. They were dying in the darkness and they knew it—without a goal, a wall, a certain purpose or a door.

For that was the way the thing had come. That was the way the thing had happened. Yes, it was there—on many a night long past and wearily accomplished, in ten thousand little towns and in ten million barren streets where all the passion, hope and hunger of the famished men beat like a great pulse through the fields of night—it was there and nowhere else that all this madness had been brewed.

And yet, what really had been changed in life? Below their feet, the earth was still and everlasting as it had always been. And around them in the cemetery the air brooded with a lazy drowsy warmth. There was the cry of the sweet-singing birds again, the sudden thrumming bullet noises in undergrowth and leaf, and the sharp cricketing stitch of afternoon, the broken lazy sounds from far away, a voice in the wind, a boy’s shout, a cry, the sound of a bell, as well as all the drowsy fragrance of a thousand warm intoxicating odors—the resinous smell of pine, and the smells of grass and warm sweet clover. It was all as it had always been, but the town where he had spent his childhood and which lay stretched out before him in the evening light had changed past recognition: the town with its quiet streets and the old frame houses which

were almost obscured below the massed leafy spread of trees, was now scarred with hard raw patches of bright concrete on which the sun fell wearily, or with raw clumps and growths of new construction—skyscrapers, garages, hotels, glittering residential atrocities of stucco and raw brick—or it was scored and scarred harshly by new streets and roads.

The place looked like a battle field; it was cratered and shelltorn with savage explosions of brick and concrete all over town. And in the interspaces the embowered remnants of the old and pleasant town remained, timid, retreating, overwhelmed, to remind one in all this harsh new din, of foot-falls in a quiet street as men went home at noon, of laughter and quiet voices and the leafy rustle of the night. For this was lost!

This image of his loss, and theirs, had passed through his mind with the speed of light, the instancy of thought, and now he heard his mother's voice again:

"And you'll come back!" he heard her saying. "There's no better or more beautiful place on earth than in these mountains, boy—and some day you'll come back again," she cried with all the invincible faith and hopefulness of her strong heart.

An old and tragic light was shining faintly on the incredible, time-enchanted hills. It was shining like the light of dreams on the rocky little river which he had seen somewhere, somehow, from the windows of a train long, long ago, in his childhood, somewhere before memory began, and which had wound its deathless magic in his heart forever. And that old and tragic light of fading day shone faintly on their faces, and suddenly they were fixed there like a prophecy with the hills and river all

around them—and there was something lost, intolerable, foretold and come to pass, and like old time and destiny—some magic that he could not say.

Down by the river's edge in darkness now he heard the bell, the whistle and the pounding wheel. It brought to him, as it had done ten thousand times in childhood, its great promise of morning, new lands, and a shining city.

And now, receding, far and faint, he heard again the whistle of the great train pounding on the rails across the river. It swept away from them leaving the lost and lonely thunder of its echoes in the hills, the flame-flare of its terrific furnace for a moment, and then just heavy wheels and rumbling loaded cars—and, finally, nothing but the silence it had left behind it.

Now, even farther off and almost lost, he heard for the last time its wailing and receding cry, bringing to him again all its wild and secret prophecy, its pain of going, and its triumphant promise of new lands. He saw them fixed forever in his vision, and the lonely light was shining on their faces, and he felt an intolerable pain, an unutterable joy and triumph as he knew that he would leave them. And something in his heart was saying like a demon's whisper of unbodied joy that spoke of flight and darkness, new earth he could touch and make his own again: Soon! Soon! Soon!

Then they all got into the car again and drove rapidly away from the great hill of the dead, the woman toward the certitude of lights, the people and the town; the young man toward the train, the city, and the voyages—all of the gold-bright waters of the morning, the seas, the harbors, and the magic of the ships.

BREACH OF PROMISE: STILL A RACKET

BY ANTHONY M. TURANO

UNDER the early laws of England the courts had the power to order the "specific performance" of a promise of marriage. A repudiated fiancée could legally compel her recalcitrant suitor to carry out his plighted word by actually wedding her. Gradually, however, these unpleasant ceremonies, probably witnessed by sheriffs and bailiffs, fell into general disfavor. Finally, under George II, in 1754, they were formally abolished by an Act of Parliament.

But the common law judges remained determined that matrimonial backsliding should not go without legal penalty, and through the usual process of judicial legislation and the amplified reiteration of earlier decisions, they soon brought forth, as a substitute punishment, the action for damage known as breach of promise. Certain rules were borrowed from the law of commercial obligations, and it was argued that since the non-performance of a business undertaking was legally redressed in damages, likewise the default in the execution of a promise to marry must call for punishment by payment of money. So marriage, in addition to being a divine sacrament under canonical law, was also defined as a simple civil contract; and the person who reneged on his pledge to enter into it must make financial amends to the rejected party.

Fortunately, the War of Independence came too late for us to inherit the earlier system of compelling wedlock. But the

subsequent dicta of the common law were adopted by our courts, without the loss of a syllable, and are still with us in all their musty trappings. A recent American restatement of the venerable doctrine appears from *Ruling Case Law* (Vol. 4, p. 143):

The law generally takes the rather worldly view that marriage is a "valuable" consideration; a thing not only possessing value, but one the value of which may be estimated in money, and therefore, in a sense, marriage engagements are regarded as business transactions, entered into with a view, in part at least, to pecuniary advantage.

Poets may sing the inexpressible glory of the hymeneal urge, but sober judges, in hearing cases of matrimonial hesitation, must base their sentences upon counting-house calculations and the rhetoric of *Bradstreet's*. The survival of such barbarisms under modern conditions has naturally led to some amazing judicial rulings. Indeed, as I shall presently show, the action for breach of promise thrives among us as a sort of refined racket under judicial approbation.

II

A typical recent case is that of *Edith Ableman vs. Gus Holman* (Wisconsin, 1928). After an engagement of about four months, Gus withdrew his promise of marriage in the belief that the matrimonial

decision had been too hastily made. Edith herself testified that the defendant had always acted toward her "as a perfect gentleman." She also admitted that she had lost no other offers of marriage; that she had sold her engagement ring for \$275 and had kept the money with Gus's approval; and that two years after Gus's change of heart, she had married another man, with whom she was living happily, and who was "a far better man" than the first suitor.

Hence, from the viewpoint of the future mutual happiness of the litigants, Gus's recantation was obviously a piece of good luck. Yet a contract is a contract; and even when a suit accomplishes nothing more than the gratification of a personal grudge, the courts must obey earlier authorities. From her own admissions, the disowned sweetheart had landed a satisfactory husband. Nevertheless, as a deal in stocks and acres, her contemplated marriage with the first suitor would have been a more profitable venture. Her indemnity, in the first court of trial, was consequently fixed at \$15,000. The Supreme Court of the State finally cut the amount to \$4,000, and said:

Other things being equal, it is much more desirable to be a rich man's wife than a poor man's wife . . . not only so far as social position is concerned, but so far as her personal comfort and pleasure is concerned.

Indeed the ancient cynical proverb concerning the relative importance of love and silver could be elevated, without legal heresy, into a respectable maxim: *L'amour fait beaucoup, mais l'argent fait tout*. In another instance (Kansas, 1926), Maurine MacMillan demanded compensation from Guy F. Carlton, because of a wedding promise withdrawn after five months of reflection. Guy contended that he had

never entertained any altar-bound intentions, and that certain friends of Maurine had conspired to establish apparent grounds for a breach of promise suit. He also offered evidence of insanity in the family of his would-be wife, asserting that her mother, her grandmother, an aunt and an uncle, had all been confined at different times for mental ailments. That the lunacy was hereditary did not appear as an established medical fact. Yet it would be difficult to argue that the circumstances of the case pointed to a lasting domestic union.

Nevertheless, a verdict was rendered for \$15,666 and the Appellate Court of the State solemnly declared it just and equitable.

Rather than countenance the breach of an accepted proposal, the learned judges are willing to foster the social risk of bad marriages, even if they must be called upon, soon after, to separate the couple by divorce. In *Milder vs. Milder* (Iowa, 1920), a quondam wife sued her former husband for an alleged revocation of his agreement to take her back. The defendant disclaimed the promise, and called attention to his very limited financial means; but he was none the less ordered to pay \$2,500.

A like non-performance of a disputed offer to remarry a former mate was punished with damages two years later, in the case of *Goodner vs. Goodner*, by the highest court of Tennessee.

The fact that neither of these couples could live harmoniously in wedlock had been judicially established by two decrees of divorce. It could have been easily predicted, therefore, that if the promises to remarry had been carried out, the second marriages would have also turned out badly. But the law is the law, and judges are judges.

III

The appalling degree of judicial uniformity in the preservation of this preposterous doctrine, in all States but one, will be shown by a few other examples. In *Fellers vs. Howe* (Nebraska, 1921), the defendant was ordered to pay \$17,000 for the breach of a marriage agreement that the plaintiff herself could have broken at any time during the twenty years that she claimed it lasted. In *Dyer vs. Lalor* (Vermont, 1920), a penalty of \$20,000 was imposed under like conditions. In *Rubin vs. Klemer* (Rhode Island, 1921), a saleslady succeeded in penalizing her *amoroso* in the sum of \$3,000 for failing to call a minister after a courtship of barely five months. In the same State, in 1931, a stenographer, Grace Sanctuary, obtained a judgment against her employer, Edwin Carey, for \$15,000, which was later compromised out of court. The betrothal, according to the plaintiff, had lasted a year. The defendant not only denied it entirely, but also insisted that his conduct could not even be called courtship.

In the case of *Minnie Marks vs. Shy Mayer* (Oklahoma, 1923), the defendant met his fiancée for the first time in June, became engaged to her in July, and withdrew his word in August. The young woman's mental anguish was assessed by the jury, under the court's instructions, at \$5,000, and the State Supreme Court gallantly concurred. In California, as recently as 1931, Mae Bell Veall, aged forty-eight years, was awarded \$25,000 against James Sanborn, fifteen years her senior, to repair her grievous wounds, by reason of a proposal revoked ten months after its acceptance. Although James emphatically contradicted Mae's story, the appellate tribunal affirmed the judgment, though it cut the "damages" to \$15,000. In the case

of *Rose Tanous vs. Michael E. Nagem* (Maine, 1930), the forsaken sweetheart was a self-supporting business woman in her middle twenties. There was no proof of physical intimacy during the one-year period of the engagement; and the case rested entirely on the troth given and withdrawn. A verdict for \$5,244.66 was solemnly approved on appeal.

The courts have so far forgotten the idealistic elements of matrimony that they do not hesitate to award compensation under the most incredible conditions. It has been held that a breach of the promise of marriage was not justified by the discovery that the plaintiff had Negro blood in her veins, or that there was a great disparity in age or character, or that the pledged bride habitually drank to excess. In the case of *Bessie Shepler vs. George W. Chamberlain* (Michigan, 1924), it was the considered opinion of the court that a slight touch of carcinoma need not discourage a trip to the altar:

Defendant's breach of his agreement to marry the plaintiff was not excused by reason of his affliction with a cancer of the lip, which was readily curable when discovered, and not a communicable or hereditary disease, in the absence of testimony that his condition would be aggravated, or that death would be hastened, by consummation of the marriage.

It may be assumed, of course, that the plaintiff's attorney in all such cases has considerable to say about the loss of affection, the hurt pride, and the mortification of his client. That these are sometimes the true consequences of the recantation of matrimonial promises is not to be denied. But it should be unnecessary to point out that, specifically, they are rather the results of disappointed love, and are felt just as keenly in the absence of a legally actionable promise of marriage. Certainly

such spiritual bruises cannot be cured by a willy-nilly journey to the altar, or by the auric salve of a munificent legal judgment. It is also to be remembered that life may contain a succession of other social slights, public humiliations, and injured feelings that the law must leave unremedied, unless it elevates every inferiority complex into a suit for damages. Among such might be mentioned the electoral defeat of a well-meaning candidate, the black-balling of an aspiring Shriner, the dropping of a name from the Social Register, and a failure to get a bid to the Policeman's Ball.

IV

If the element of mental anguish were the determining factor in measuring the compensation, it would be difficult to explain the disparity in the amount allowed in each case. For it is assumed, even among the most indoctrinated lawyers and jurists, that the emotional suffering of a spurned Cinderella does not greatly differ in degree from the like afflictions of a princess royal. But the assessment depends, as I have already suggested, almost entirely upon what the courts call the lady's "pecuniary expectations." The prevailing rule, a purely commercial one, was clearly stated a few years ago by the Supreme Court of Utah, in *Arbon vs. Blyth*:

The damages should be placed at such an amount as would place her in as good a position financially as she would have occupied, if the promise had been fulfilled.

A more irrational ruling is difficult to imagine. For it follows that because of a word given and revoked, the petitioning woman is entitled to recover such portion of her fiancé's wealth as she would have had as his wife. Yet the same reasoning

may be found in hundreds of other decisions in every State. In the recent case of *Bertha B. Cleavenger vs. John H. Castle* (Michigan, 1931), it appears that when the parties first met the man was earning \$5 a day. If his economic standing had not improved, it is probable that the courts would never have had occasion to inquire into his private affairs, since the value of a judgment depends on its collection.

Sometime after the proposal, however, he made considerable money in real estate speculation. Consequently, those dull pains in the lady's pectoral region became legally translatable into bank notes. The jury had been instructed, as usual, that matrimony is a sort of bargain and sale agreement, with both eyes to its material advantages. It was accordingly decided that nothing less than \$450,000 could possibly affect a cure; but the State Supreme Court declared that a bare \$150,000 would restore the patient completely. Although one of the judges held out for a further reduction, the prevailing opinion says:

After a careful examination of the record, we are unwilling to say that this judgment is so large that it shocks one's sense of justice.

The extraordinarily high penalties in this case may be explained, to some degree, by the woman's testimony to the effect that she had consented to sexual relations in consideration of the marriage. This is always deemed legal ground for aggravation of damages. For whenever the question of sexual behavior is involved, the courts are ready to fancy that the matrimonially minded damsel is the victim of a Svengali-Trilby entanglement. They do not recognize the obvious fact that between parties of adult years, seductions are largely mutual, and that they could be

plausibly classified in that special division of the law of contracts known to lawyers as joint adventures.

There may be cases, of course, of an older man imposing upon the inferior mentality or tender years of a female, but the learned judges seem to forget that every State prescribes ample punishments for rape and seduction, not only in the form of imprisonment but also in money judgments. Such crimes are punishable whether a promise of marriage has been made or not. In treating them as matrimonial offenses, the law associates the wedded state with evils that have no necessary connection with it.

The penalties are also increased by the courts when it appears that the two parties have voluntarily lived together for many years without wedlock; and it is argued that heavy awards are necessary, under such conditions, in order to give economic assistance to a woman who is no longer marriageable or self-supporting. But such illicit unions may just as frequently exist without nuptial intentions on either side. If the courts are unwilling to agree that the woman, in such rare cases, should suffer the consequences of a risk willingly assumed, the relationship could be treated as a marriage *de facto*. In granting a divorce, support money could be allowed according to her actual need, the period of cohabitation, her age, and other such equities.

However, this question of outraged womanhood is present in only a small number of cases. For obvious reasons, it was not involved in what is perhaps the most amazing of all breach of promise decisions. An action was filed in the City of New York, a few years ago, by Honora May O'Brien, aged twenty-nine, against John Bernard Manning, aged eighty-four, partially palsied, but immensely

wealthy. No period of courtship was involved. There was an offer, an acceptance, and a promise; and the ceremony was to follow within a few days.

The actual injury here is not easy to find, without an application of legal principles. The young lady admitted frankly that she had no affection for her octogenarian beau. Hence there was no question of a broken heart or of unrequited love. Indeed, a legally untrained layman might be driven to suspect that the suit was inspired by a disappointed love of the old man's money. But in law marriage is a business; and in business transactions material gain is the moving factor. Although Honora had risked or given nothing, she could still recover something quite substantial. The learned court said:

If a plaintiff enters into a marriage engagement from mercenary motives only, she may still recover, if she intended and was willing to carry out the agreement.

The jury had fixed the value of Honora's disappointment at the stupendous sum of \$225,000. Yet when the elderly Mr. Manning made application to have it set aside, the judges could not believe that the twelve citizens had been swayed by "sympathy or prejudice or passion." But, perhaps for the sake of tempering the law with mercy, the judgment was finally reduced to a mere \$125,000. The opinion of the court continues:

What pecuniary loss has the plaintiff suffered? That is measured in part by the defendant's means, but other elements enter into it. The health of the defendant, his age and probability of life, his manner of living, his social status, his generosity or his niggardliness—these are also to be considered.

Whether the matrimonial defaulter was generous or miserly does not appear from the record. But it is a biological fact that

for a palsied Croesus of eighty-four winters the probabilities of long life are not very encouraging. So we are driven to the conclusion that the measure of the woman's disappointment, after an engagement of a few days, depended upon the speed of the undertaker and the consolation of a large inheritance.

V

The test of any sound legal doctrine, after all, is the general reach of its equities and the universality of its application. The breach of promise action falls deplorably short in these requirements. Theoretically, the law prescribes a right to damages, regardless of the sex of the injured party. But it is well known that in practice such suits are preëminently the legal vehicle for the proverbial wrath of the woman scorned. After examining hundreds of decisions from every State, I found only one case in which a man sought judicial medicine for cardiacal trauma.

This preponderance of female plaintiffs may be explained, to some degree, by the fact that men in general are better economic targets for damage suits. Furthermore, a man will wisely hesitate to take the witness stand and give oath that his tender heart has been completely busted by the inconstancy of a weaker vessel. Hence the female party to a contract matrimonial may exercise her traditional privilege of changing her mind, without danger of legal complications.

It is also true that at the trial of such cases, she enjoys certain distinct advantages. Contrary to the current popular notion, no *billets doux* are required to establish a promise of marriage. Of course, if a man values his Packard or his bank account, he should indite his love notes on the other side of the altar. Letters are

very effective when read by a jury, and can also be used as veritable Aladdin's lamps in compelling a man to come across, for fear of publicity. But the proof of matrimonial intentions is by no means dependent upon written amorous admissions. An agreement to marry may be inferred from the conduct of the parties, like any other contract in commercial law, even without an actual promise, written or oral.

Another reason is the notorious maudlin chivalry of American juries, and their readiness to assist any lady in real or imaginary distress. Her unsupported word is usually sufficient against the most emphatic negatives of the male defendant. According to custom, the wooing usually takes place at the home of the fair plaintiff, and consequently she is able to summon a greater number of "disinterested persons" to prove the promise. The law not only fails to disqualify her parents, relatives and friends as witnesses, but through an exception in the general rule, permits them to give their *opinions*, based on their observations, as to whether the parties acted like engaged persons. Thus the defeat of such actions is among the most difficult legal tasks; and it is easy to imagine that an unscrupulous woman may often prove a marriage pledge when none was ever made.

But aside from being an epicene remedy that serves only one of the sexes, the breach of promise action does not even afford equal benefits to all lineal descendants of Eve in like circumstances. The average intelligent woman refuses, for reasons of personal dignity, to apply for what the newspapers call heart-balm. When she suffers disappointment in love, she prefers to put the incident down among the other slings and arrows of this mundane life.

Thus the number of women who are at the same time love-lorn and shkel-conscious is reduced to a small minority, whose success must necessarily depend on the economic ability of the forsworn swains. A jilt administered by a corporation executive will yield more revenue than the romantic tergiversation of an unemployed plumber. A Mrs. Doubleday may sue for \$1,500,000 when a Mr. McCormick breaks his plighted word, but the girl at the ribbon counter must nurse her internal wounds without benefit of judge or jury, when the shipping clerk transfers his attentions to the new blonde book-keeper. So that, in the last analysis, this special method in the judicial distribution of wealth is available only to a few aggressive women whose connivance or good fortune has procured them pledges from men who can pay.

That this form of lawsuit is frequently a sub-legal basis for downright blackmailing, is a matter of general public knowledge. The great majority of them are prudently settled upon threat of litigation, while many others are compromised before trial. It goes without saying that in such settlements the jingle of silver plays a larger rôle than the appeal to reason. The price of bachelorhood is seldom disclosed. But in the recent dismissal of an action brought by a waitress against the pugilist, Max Baer, the reported consideration was something like \$6,000. Whatever the true figure, it served the lady, literally, as a generous wedding gift. She was married, to another man, a day or two after receiving the money.

Heavy ransoms are sometimes paid to women for the release of their promised spouses. Although such deals are usually dispatched *sub rosa*, without judicial aid, some enlightenment may be gleaned from the action of Genevieve Attridge *vs.* Wini-

fred Penbroke (New York, 1932). The plaintiff complained that the defendant had agreed to pay her \$100,000 in consideration of her breaking her engagement to Harold E. Church. She had already received a part-payment of more than \$20,000, but was having difficulty in collecting the balance. The court held that no relief could be granted to her because the law did not favor the breach of a marriage contract.

VI

The obvious remedy for these unsavory conditions is a legal redefinition of marriage, with more attention to modern knowledge of human emotions, and less respect for the older conception of the institution as a feminine commercial career. The courts of the republic are still too uniformly bound by the abracadabra of the common law to warrant hope of an early movement in this direction. But an encouraging liberal trend may nonetheless be seen in one or two isolated decisions.

A notable departure from the ruling in the Manning Case above cited was made by the Supreme Court of Missouri (1929) in a suit brought by Ruth E. Parks against Ben F. Marshall. There was evidence that in accepting the nuptial pledge of a mentally deficient innamorato, the plaintiff had been prompted entirely by pecuniary expectations. In reversing the \$15,000 verdict of the lower court, the Supreme Court held:

If, then, the plaintiff, at the time of entering into the contract, did not love the defendant . . . the testimony was admissible, not only in mitigation of damages, but as a substantive and complete defense.

No one whose reasoning is free from the archaic predicates of three centuries

ago will be inclined to quarrel with this decision. Unfortunately, however, it is a ruling that can easily be defeated by protestations of continuing love on the part of the applicant. Furthermore, in failing to carry its logic far enough, it leaves the subject ludicrously lopsided. For no court has yet been bold enough to announce that a male runagate may plead his own erotic frigidity as an excuse for rejecting the nuptial bed. The quaint legal assumption is that the constancy of human feelings may be unconditionally guaranteed: in proposing marriage, a man undertakes to deliver a general cargo of love and worldly goods on a fixed day. If, in the meantime, his affections have abated, either because of better acquaintance with the fair object, or some other cause beyond his control, he is still legally obliged to deliver himself as he is, when the lady demands it, or let her have seizure of his estate.

Another lone attempt to stray from the cow path of medieval stupidity was made in *Minsky vs. Satenstein* (1928), in which the Supreme Court of New Jersey said:

The State has an interest to see that the contract, when consummated by marriage, results in a union which will not only prove happy and lasting, but will fit well into the general social scheme.

It is clear that no contract of marriage to which one of the parties has ceased to consent can possess any of the salutary social requirements here prescribed. At least by implication, this decision ignores the older view. However, there is one State in which the entire doctrine of breach of promise has been firmly denounced as a matter of principle. In *Morgan vs. Yarborough*, Louisiana's court of last resort held:

We are constrained to say that a female of refined sensibility could scarcely bring herself to such a suit; and that the appeals which are usually made to juries in such cases, on the score of the wounded affections of the woman, can have little foundation in truth. Such suits are not unfrequently the mere instruments of extortion.

It must be remembered, of course, that Louisiana is the only American State whose legal system is largely derived from the Code Napoleon, and whose courts are not bound to reiterate the antiquities of English common law. It should be a significant fact that the commercial view of marriage is a peculiar heritage of Anglo-Saxon countries and has no recognition in any other system of jurisprudence. Under the Spanish Code, as it is still applied in the Philippine Islands, the matrimonial turncoat is merely ordered to indemnify the other party for her actual expenses, such as the trousseau and other nuptial preparations.

The same rule prevails in Italy and France. According to Roman Law such actions were prohibited on the ground that they were *contra bonos mores*, i.e., contrary to good public morals.

From the foregoing review it must appear that the same objection may be advanced, even with greater force, under modern conditions. Aside from the preservation of a musty legal dogma that has small contemporary acceptance, it is difficult to perceive any wholesome purpose in such actions. Even if they could enforce fidelity, they would not induce lasting or socially desirable marriages.

Their total abolition, therefore, by statutory enactment in the various States of the Union, would bring no more deleterious moral result than the end of a special form of chiseling.

AMERICAN PROPAGANDA IN RUSSIA

BY ANNA LOUISE STRONG

FOR more than a decade the United States has worried about Soviet propaganda within its borders. This official fear on the part of Americans was the chief reason advanced against normal relations with the U.S.S.R. in the years 1919-1933. The fear was so deeply felt that Mr. Litvinoff, in his historic negotiations with President Roosevelt, had to make assurance doubly sure in three separate paragraphs, promising that not only the Soviet government and all its officials, but also all organizations receiving from it financial aid or permitted to reside on its territory, would refrain from propaganda for the forcible overthrow of the American government.

Why has no one thought of the counter possibility? Will American propaganda unsettle the Russians? Have Americans so little confidence in the propaganda they carry? Or do they fail to recognize it as propaganda at all? Are they so sure of its eternal rightness that they call it not propaganda but the law of the ages? Or do they, way down in their hearts, doubt its ultimate success?

Have Americans missed the plaintive protests that occasionally appear in the journals of Europe and Asia, meekly pleading that Americanism is a greater danger to mankind than Communism, Fascism, Ghandiism or Confucianism? Have they forgotten how bitterly Old London fought the propaganda of Self-ridge, announcing the advent, upon Brit-

ish soil, of the American department store? And how in the end the Londoners succumbed? Do they not know that they have all but conquered the world already with the propaganda of 97 cent night-gowns, of five-and-ten-cent store gadgets, of neat, stylish and always spotless clothing as the standard of success? The propaganda of many bath-rooms with shining plumbing, once gleaming white, but now resplendent with all the colors of the rainbow, and with toilet paper to match? The propaganda of automobiles by the millions, laying a strata of poison gas along the highways, uniting the ends of the earth in one monotone of mechanized motion? Do they not know that their propaganda overthrew the meek religion of Confucius and is now shaking the social systems of Asia? I am not referring to the propaganda carried by missionaries in black leather Bibles, but to the far more potent propaganda of the neat and sanitary houses where the missionaries live. Have Americans forgotten the power of their propaganda to thrill, disturb, and dismay all the nations of men and women?

II

The scene is a crowded street-car anywhere in the Soviet Union. Its occupants are drab enough to outer view, but do not appear shabby to themselves. They have grown accustomed to dark-toned

clothing as wearing longest; the jackets are frayed but will last for years. Ivan here has a long sheepskin torn at the edges but well adapted to winter blizzards; it has known service for a decade. The student beyond pulls tightly about him a new, shoddy overcoat, issued on coupon from the university. It is not too warm, but a prize for a student. Near by a civil servant wears a pre-war coat of imported material—turned, as you can tell by the position of buttonholes, but by far the best coat in the car.

Bound on a trip for the rural regions I enter the street-car. My twelve years' residence in the Soviet Union has given me clothes not unlike those of my neighbors, and, in addition, the blessed rest of never worrying about appearances. But my feet betray me; I simply cannot walk long distances in European shoes. Just now I wear some dull red sandals that were considered swanky in America in 1928, the last shoes left from my trip-before-last to the United States. Though twice half-soled and otherwise mended, their color has preserved appearance far beyond their turn. The eyes of the other women in the car travel downward, inspecting the neat, comfortable cut of my shoes. Then suddenly one of them addresses me, with the easy approach of the Russian: "Say, citizenness, where did you get those shoes?"

"Got them in America," I answer, and the crowd settles back, giving up the shoes but seizing a new subject: "And what's it like in America? Terrible crisis? Lots of unemployment? Now, really, what does an office worker get? What does bread cost? What did those shoes cost in America? Are workers starving in America? Or do they all have automobiles? Is it true that American working-girls wear silk stockings?"

For a single American who wishes to copy the Soviet Union, a thousand Russians wish to copy America. Nor is there any ban upon this propaganda. It is even spread, in part, by the Soviet government itself. Yet there are aspects of American propaganda which may well prove dangerous, not only to the peace of mind of Russians but even to the established order of the Soviets.

What is this American propaganda? Can we analyze its constituent elements? Unfortunately for our purpose, there is no "American International," like the Communist International, to state its theories in theses. Possibly that itself is significant. One noticeable characteristic of the American is his contempt for theory, his pride in being "a practical man." The typical American philosophy is pragmatism, determining truth by "whether it works." But to what end it works is not revealed. Even our President, in the midst of crisis, disarms criticism by openly admitting that he has no final theory. "We will try this, and if it doesn't work, we'll try something different." One of the most typical American slogans is, "We don't know where we're going, but we're on our way."

And yet perhaps, one may analyze, if not where America is going, at least some of the basic assumptions behind America's propaganda in the world. One may analyze them best by being, as I am, an American, who has spent the greater part of twelve years abroad. There was a time, some generations back, when Americanism meant "freedom," when America was a threat to dynasties, both through the example of her own history and through the welcome she extended to the oppressed of all nations, permitting them to organize on her territory revolutionary societies for the overthrow of govern-

ments abroad. There are still old-fashioned Americans who identify patriotism with freedom, but their number is not large and is rapidly getting smaller. Certainly, in the rest of the world, "Americanism" has long since won quite different synonyms.

To most of the world America stands today for mass production, standardization, speed, and, based upon these, great quantities of cheap goods for the masses. The "American standard of living" is never calculated in terms of health, leisure or knowledge, but always in terms of goods and speed. America stands also for gold; for the standardization of man himself in terms of money. "A, \$5,000 man," a "\$100,000 executive"—such phrases are heard only in America.

A few years ago I learned from an efficiency expert in a great modern industrial plant the methods he had introduced for speeding up the workers. Those who could not keep up were charitably given a chance to qualify in half a dozen other positions before they were finally dropped; when they were ultimately fired, not only the firm but the men themselves and all their co-workers, knew that they were "worthless." Those who succeeded were given a small fraction of the increase their greater productivity brought. So deftly was the system managed that, save for one fruitless strike of a dozen girls, there was no protest. Those who might have organized protest were already discredited even in their own eyes. "All the efficient workers like it," said the expert. "They work faster but they also get more. Any man who doesn't like to work more to get more is no real American."

"To work more to get more!" To work ever faster without asking to what social end! The ultimate theory doesn't matter; we're practical men. We get things done

in the world; we get things made. What things and why—we should worry about that! For the net result is, "we get more," and this getting is measured wholly in terms of goods. Someone in the Bible said that a man's life "consisteth not in the goods which he possesseth." But that's an Oriental view, not an American one. Not only does an American's individual life consist in the abundance of goods, but his social life, his community standing, is also thus measured. The college youth who needs a sporty roadster to attract the girls, the discouraged salesman whose wife induces him to put on a better front than he can afford and thus achieve success—these are types peculiar to America. Are they already passing types, from which the bloom has gone? Possibly, but they are still "typically American" in the eyes of the world at large.

III

Let us take first the very compelling propaganda of goods, produced by mass production on a scale never before dreamed by man. More and more goods, always new and spotless goods, always swiftly moving goods. The ease of going into a department store and finding a dozen styles of raincoats, all of them in all sizes; a hundred varieties of rayon underwear, peach, pink and snowy white, all fresh and to be cast aside at the slightest wear. Even if today you can't afford thus to discard them, it is American propaganda that you should.

I enter a women's club where I am to lecture and feel suddenly overwhelmed by the heaps of silks, woolens, furs, costume jewelry, real jewelry, lipstick properly applied, powder shaded to the wearer, collars lavish with yards of fine lace or crêpe forever fresh. I am filled with wor-

ried wonder; how can I ever live up to these things? Nor can I console myself philosophically with the thought that the best minds will not notice what I am wearing; for the best minds in this assembly will notice exactly that and put me down as a sloppy woman if I am not "properly" apparelled. My thoughts rush back to women's meetings in Russia and I strive to recall their clothing. Somehow I cannot remember it. It must have been rather drab. It was the faces I noticed. Here in the American club there are also faces, intelligent faces, correctly powdered faces, but somehow they seem smothered under the profuse perfection of goods.

When I remember the dearth of goods in the Soviet Union, and recall how one stands in line for a bar of soap and grabs the first piece of cotton print that appears in the stores, I suddenly understand why American magazines are kept out of the Soviet Union, except as they come to American journalists or engineers. If my one pair of worn red sandals caused unrest in a street-car, might not a mail-order catalogue start an opposition party, a party devoted, as was indeed one opposition, to promoting cheap goods swiftly? Might not a Woolworth store start a riot that would call out the mounted militia? I remember once when a new department store opened in Moscow, selling goods to all and sundry without permit, how mounted men on the sidewalk protected the plate-glass windows from the pressure of crowds. Might not American propaganda in this manner overthrow a government "by force and violence?"

Let us pass to another phase of American propaganda—speed, efficiency, motion—the belief that it is somehow better to be in a dozen places at once than to

sit at peace in one. Long rows of taxis at stations, whizzing swiftly to any destination; airplane lines, bus lines, Boston today, New York tomorrow, Chicago the day after. Even the gospel of goods is incomplete without the gospel of rapid production—the endless whirring of many machines turning out products with great rapidity.

America takes these ideals as such cosmic realities that she quite forgets that there have been in the past great nations which preferred grandeur to goods and dignity to swift motion. Even today many a feudal-minded British lady will admit her preference for the "personal service" of a maid putting hot-water bottles into cold sheets instead of the "mechanical turning of a hot-water tap." The aristocratic privilege of being "served" is more important to her than comfort. But she is, after all, merely a stubborn survival. The American ideal (or shall we call it "propaganda"? which is only a name for an ideal acting aggressively to gain adherents), is the ideal of swift and mobile traders' capitalism, based on mass production of cheap commodities for mass consumers; it has conquered one by one the countries of Europe. Will it conquer the Soviet Union, too?

In certain of its aspects American propaganda has already conquered the Soviets. "American speed," "American scope," "American technique," have long been Moscow's slogans. The standardization associated with Henry Ford is studied in children's text-books across the Siberian snows. Mass production on a scale even vaster than American, goods even greater than America's—such is Soviet propaganda to the youth in all its factories and schools. "Overtake them and surpass them," says the slogan.

But beyond this point we come to a

distinction which marks the parting of the ways. It is contained in that peculiarly American phrase, already referred to, "a \$10,000 man." Far as the nations of the earth have followed America's foot-steps, they have stopped short of this ultimate standardization, which began two decades ago in New York and conquered a continent. It is applied in America not only to business executives, but even to doctors, clergymen, and social workers. To the average American this materialistic philosophy has long since ceased to be shocking. He is accustomed to articles comparing the emoluments of Presidents of the United States with those of bankers, as a reason why first-class men stay out of politics.

When I think of what would happen in Moscow to anyone who alluded to Stalin, or even to a humble party secretary in a small township as "a \$1,000 man," or—to be quite complimentary,—"a \$1,000,000 man," I realize that here is the place where American propaganda stops short and Soviet propaganda begins. To the Soviet mind there is still an indecency, a certain obscenity even, in estimating a useful man in terms of money. A person who used such a phrase would shut himself out of good society in Moscow as surely as a débutante of Victorian days who used the language of the brothel.

IV

Men strive for power and place in the Soviet Union, as everywhere else; they are not altruistic angels. But never do they measure power and place in terms of cash. Never does a university youth choose to be a geologist, chemist, or engineer of transport "for the money that is in it." Never does a maiden ask, among

the boys who please her, which of them is likely to prove the "best provider."

A woman may choose her job, as President Kalinin's wife went to the Altai, because she liked the scenery and was drawn by the need of a backward nation. A girl may pick her friends because of their standing as zealous "Young Communists." A wife may choose her husband for physical or mental allurements, or even because "he's an old revolutionist and strengthens me with his knowledge." Motives quaint to the rest of the world may move them. But never the motive of money.

Nor is even the motive of goods important in the personal life of the Soviet's "best people." That there should be plentiful goods for all is a public ideal. But that individuals should pile up goods and be judged by goods-accumulation, is a view that is quite demoded. The maids of my acquaintance in Moscow meet young men, fall in love, marry. Never does one of them think that her attraction depends on a new gown, or that lipstick of the correct shade is important in her young loving, or that wives hold husbands by correct coiffeuring. They put on neat dresses of no particular style and go to the theater to rave over ballets and symphony concerts as good as any in the world. Should a student arrive from the country in high boots or corduroy pants he is fully at home at the opera.

Yet the new standards are not completely established. While the daughter of the house with which I am best acquainted looks about for a new coat only when the old is worn threadbare or actually into holes, while her dreams and those of her companions are to win good places in serving the country, to make records in production, to show up well at the party clean-up, yet there is one

girl in the household who devotes much thought to apparel, trying to heap up for the future extra blouses, extra shoes, extra goods. She is the housemaid; the others say of her: "She has still the peasant mentality." A basic problem for the Soviet Union's future is whether her type will pass or increase.

Though nowhere in the Soviet Union is man measured in terms of money, there are still many persons of "peasant mentality" who judge life in terms of goods. One hears of a whole new class of women (or is it a very old class?), who seek for husbands the army men, G.P.U. officials and higher civil servants who have "good coöperative stores." There are old and new ideals in conflict in a land still incompletely Socialist.

The problem is accentuated today by the serious shortage of all goods of consumption in the Soviet Union. For five years past Soviet policy has sacrificed comfort and goods to the greater necessity of rapidly building up the country. The nation's labor and savings have gone into power-plants, steel mills, railroads, machine-building works, coal mines—to the mechanism which will produce goods day after tomorrow. In all this rush, the Soviet standard of living has been neglected, and remains painfully low.

"It is the correct method," an American consul-general, who was engineer by past profession, once said to me. "The correct method if your people will stand for it."

The method demands sacrifice such as no other nation dares ask of its citizens. It demands that able administrators who in America would be rated at \$50,000, shall work in the Soviet Union for little more than room, food, unfashionable clothes, and the rank of "responsible worker." It demands that no one shall heap up wealth in gold and possessions,

that the necessities of life shall be rationed among all, including the highest officials, in order that all the national savings may go into publicly owned capital investment. It requires that youth's ideals shall be not comfort nor personal display but production records, that millions of the best and most energetic shall renounce ease and home ties to conquer deserts without hope of personal gain. Sometimes, through failure or inefficiency over a large area, it demands endurance of actual cold, pestilence, hunger. Sometimes, it demands death.

The young generation rises to meet this demand today in the Soviet Union. Some of them quite consciously, understanding the full cost and reason for it; others unconsciously, not knowing what they sacrifice. They have never seen or dreamed of the things one can see by merely walking through a Woolworth store.

Comes now the American propagandist, with his road made smooth by the Soviet government. An engineer of "American scope, American speed," with all the things the Russians have been taught to admire. He descends, like Jupiter on Danae, in a shower of fountain pens, silk stockings, lavish typewriter paper, shiny new handbags; his wife has clothes they never dreamed of; his rooms are full of amazing conveniences. Nor is he at all backward about preaching the propaganda of Americanism. Often he proclaims abroad that every American worker has an automobile. His very presence shouts aloud: "Behold what goods there are; acquire them."

The sturdiest of the Soviet youth may scoff: "What a bourgeois! He has no books; no interest in public affairs! As for his goods, we'll get them all some day—and for everyone." But what of the

many folk of "peasant mentality?" There are certainly plenty who hang about the Americans for their gifts of discarded trinkets, a handkerchief, stockings, or soap. And if many more Americans come, with their confident propaganda, may they not prove disrupting to the steady onward march of Soviet workers, regimented towards one collective ideal?

Four years ago I visited a tiny collective farm on the Lower Volga. Some forty families had pooled their scanty equipment, their twenty-five poorly fed horses, their ancient ploughs; they were tilling together long slopes of sandy soil. They stopped to rest their horses during the noon-day hour and asked me about America. "How do American peasants live?" they asked.

I looked at the midday dinner of potato soup fattened with sunflower oil, and millet porridge with milk. They were exulting that "now in the collective farm we have fat in our soup for sowing time; formerly the employing farmer gave us farmhands fat only at harvest." I looked at children accustomed to bread without butter, saving for winter school the shoes they had never had before. I looked at the eager eyes of the young village Communist—you can pick them in any group by their obvious anxiety that everything shall go well—who was whipping on this backward peasantry towards crop rotation, tractors, modern farming. He had told them, no doubt, that by collective farming they were rapidly taking first place in world agriculture, all of which, historically, was true. But I thought how easily a little American propaganda could demoralize that farm.

I told of the size of American farms in the West, based on the homestead laws, a size no peasant farmer in old Russia ever knew; I told of mechaniza-

tion and science and universal literacy, of electric lights in the homes. I saw the worry grow in that young Communist's eyes. He sensed that there were things to be said about America that would seem unexplainably opulent to his flock. I told of roads and automobiles and telephones on distant isolated farms. "From the outside of many an American farmer's place," I said, "you'd think him not merely a kulak but a big landlord. But you must look at the inside too." Then I told of mortgages, and bank ownership of land and home and machines, of insecurity of men displaced from farms, who couldn't find jobs. I watched the worry go out of that young Communist's eyes. This American visitor, he seemed to say to himself, was safe; she was more than safe; she was giving him something that he could use. But how easily it might have been otherwise!

V

Americans going to the Soviet Union give no pledge to refrain from praising American methods and standards to everyone they meet. When Soviet citizens come to America, the pledge is strict and honorably kept. A Russian student once consulted me about going to America. He was a man of thirty years, who had fought in the civil war, risen to the highest political post in his county, and thence been sent to specialize in transport engineering. Having completed a four-year course in a Soviet university, he was under consideration for a foreign scholarship to study in America. He asked me what American university life was like.

"Do you think I can stand it?" he asked. "It is very hard. If I go, I shall eventually become a specialist of highest rank in transport and we need such spe-

cialists badly. But for four years in America I shall be deprived of all social and political life. I shall be strictly forbidden to attend trade union meetings, Communist demonstrations, any working-class movements at all. I must even avoid conversation about the Soviet Union, lest I be accused of propaganda. I must give up everything that means life to me except for my technical specialty. Will I find, on the basis of my specialty, enough interesting intellectual life in an American university to make it possible to endure for four long years?"

Americans going to the Soviet Union go under no such handicap. They arrive with the prestige of engineer or skilled mechanic; they brag as they please about their native land. They celebrate "American methods" to a people prepared to admire. The Soviet government takes its chances in the comparison—which apparently the American government hesitates to do. Are the Soviets so much more confident in their system? Or do they fail to understand the disruptive threat?

One imagines they reason thus about the matter: "These Americans come only in proportion to the growth of trade with America and our purchase of American machines. No doubt, their talk will cause a little trouble, some minor discontents among persons of 'peasant mind.' But we can afford this. For the more of them there are, the more will be also the machines coming on credit from America, the swifter will be our own production of goods. They will help us satisfy more quickly the appetites they arouse." All the same, it seems to me, they are taking a chance.

But if, indeed, it should happen that American propaganda arouses unrest in the Russians, the Soviets have one sure

cure. Let all those persons who crave swift individual access to the flesh-pots of Western capitalism instead of the slower social advance which gives goods to all—let them all go abroad. I never can understand why the Soviet authorities are so stingy with exit visas, and try to keep discontented folk at home. For no sooner have their citizens made brief excursions to the outer world of capitalism than most of them want to go back.

I have seen it happen very often. The latest case was a woman I met in Montreal. She was one of the old Russian intellectuals who had once known a comfortable life; the sacrifices demanded for building the Soviet economic structure had irritated her deeply. At first sight of the capitalist world she went into raptures.

No more breadlines, butter lines, milk lines; no more contriving to get a piece of soap. How easy life was, how comfortable!

I met her three months later; already she was homesick. "These people have no purpose," she said. "I feel that I have sold myself for thread and needles. When I go back—I'm so glad that this absence is not permanent—when I go back I shall never again complain about such trifles. I shall be so glad to be back where they struggle for big things, where life has a meaning and plan."

No, the Soviets need not worry overmuch lest American propaganda unsettle the Russians. And perhaps those Americans are wise who would shut out Soviet propaganda with pledges triply signed. Wise if they wish to save a little longer their own self-confidence. For is not American propaganda already deeply doubted in the very land that gave it birth?

GERMANY SINKS INTO SLAVERY

BY S. MILES BOUTON

NOVEMBER and December, 1918, in Berlin. No week, almost no day, without a procession "demonstrating" for or against something or somebody. Street corner orators holding forth everywhere, surrounded by crowds listening to the same kind of speeches they had already heard scores of times. The burden of all public speeches in these months following the World War was the same: "*Wir sind belogen und betrogen worden.*" (We have been lied to and deceived.)

The newspapers, except the very few that did not immediately "place themselves on the basis of the facts," as the current phrase had it, echoed the cry. The people, they declared in agreement with the shouting paraders and orators, had been fooled into believing that Germany was carrying on a defensive war. They had been deceived about the course of the war, victories had been magnified, and defeats minimized or not reported at all. They had borne all griefs and privations, had made all their appalling sacrifices, "for generals, princes and capitalists." They had been *belogen und betrogen*.

This is, of course, history. It is even ancient history, considering the pace of events in the last twenty years. But there is comfort in this retrospect for the civilized world, which, viewing the reign of terror in National Socialist Germany and shocked by the seeming throwback of a people of sixty millions to medievalism,

may be inclined to despair of the possibility of that nation's returning to the Twentieth Century. And there are further comforting parallelisms between 1918-19 and 1933-34 which justify the confident prediction that the day will come when this so tragically deceived people will once more raise the same cry:

"Wir sind belogen und betrogen worden!"

The complete discrediting in 1918 of all officials, military men and royalty, and, as a corollary, of all institutions of the Empire that had been overthrown, found expression in an arrogant attitude toward all persons who refused to regard the makers of the revolution as the proponents of the only true faith and their theories of government as the last word in political wisdom. All opponents—I heard the expression scores of times in the winter after the revolution—"had blinders on" (literally "a board in front of their eyes"), but they were to be "enlightened," a favorite word in those days. If they then refused to accept the truth, it would be beaten into them. Any intimation that a republican form of government might not be adapted to German conditions and the German mentality, any suggestion that the Weimar Constitution was not perfect, aroused indignation.

The parallelism with Hitler's Germany is, as will be obvious, complete, except that the more humane rulers of the new-baked Republic did not imprison men and

women without a trial or even without a hearing for holding unorthodox opinions, did not confiscate their property without indemnification, and did not prohibit many newspapers and muzzle all those that were permitted to appear. Nor did they persecute any racial or political minority of their own people. But the heterodox found themselves, then as now, barred from all positions of profit or honor in national, State and municipal administration. Then as now, ability, training and fitness availed nothing. Then as now, the only tests were orthodoxy of political belief, orthodox *Weltanschauung*, and membership in the correct political party.

II

The parallelism becomes more striking—and more hopefully significant—as one goes on to a consideration of other phases of the revolutions of 1918 and 1933. The events following the 1918 overturn illustrated again that lack of moral courage and character among the Germans, which Bismarck so bitterly bemoaned. Men who a few weeks earlier had been convinced monarchists, men who had vied with one another in making adulatory speeches about the Kaiser, became ardent republicans between the evening of November 8 and the morning of November 10. Tens of thousands of others, although convinced that the establishing of a republican form of government constituted a vast blunder, did not have courage enough to say so. History has recorded few instances of such moral cowardice as were seen in Germany at the end of 1918 and for years thereafter. But they were paralleled fourteen and a half years later.

In the autumn of 1932 I sat at tea with a high government official. The talk naturally turned to the political situation, and

I ventured to say that Hitler, despite many absurd and wrongheaded ideas, believed honestly that he was serving the people. My remarks were received with as much scorn as a host may exhibit to a guest without violating the rules of hospitality. Hitler, he declared, was a self-seeking demagogue and charlatan, whose following was made up of the rabble, and all Germans should rejoice that there was no chance of his ever coming to power. He came to power on January 30. That evening I met my former host in the Foreign Office. He rushed toward me, his face wreathed with smiles, and cried out as he came:

"Wir haben's geschafft!" (We've done it.)

He now occupies a much more exalted position in the government, and he is but one of thousands who, like the monarchists of 1918, would not let a government change its politics faster than they could change theirs.

All these men were running true to ancient form. In 1410 the Knights of the Teutonic Order met a terrible defeat at the hands of the Poles near Tannenberg. Within ten days all the German commanderies, fortresses and cities in the Order's State rushed to do obeisance to the victorious Poles, with the single exception of Marienburg. A chronicler of those days, recording these shameful defections, commented:

"Never in any land had such faithlessness and rapid change been heard of."

While the defeat of the German armies made the revolution of 1918 possible, the special impetus to the widespread revulsion of feeling that followed it was given by the discovery of the manner in which Germany and the Germans were morally isolated in the whole world. They had had no access to foreign newspapers, and

their own press would not have even intimated the truth if it had been permitted to do so. Not for years was this feeling of dismay completely overcome. But when that time did come, the men responsible for the revolution and for their part in "stabbing the German army in the back," as it was phrased, lost credit, and the Germans found their way back to the comforting belief that sets them apart from all other peoples.

This is the belief, dinned into them for a century and more by their philosophers, poets, orators, press and pulpit, that they have "*eine geschichtliche Sendung*," a historical mission, to bring the blessings of German *Kultur* to peoples that still walk in darkness. Emanuel Geibel, born in 1815, wrote in his poem entitled "Deutschlands Beruf" (Germany's Calling):

*Und es mag am deutschen Wesen
Einmal noch die Welt genesen.*

(May the world some day regain health through the German character.)

Adam Müller, the Romanticist, wrote in 1809:

The great federation of European powers shall come some day, and it will fly the German colors, for all that is great, fundamental and eternal in every European institution is German.

Heinrich von Hardenberg, who wrote under the pen name Novalis, declared that "our mission is to civilize the earth." Similar outpourings could be quoted by the hundreds. It is true that we Americans talk about "God's own country," but we are quite content to let other peoples stumble along in their own way. Not so the Germans. I referred above to the determination of the revolutionists of 1918 to "enlighten" (*aufklären*) their opponents at home. As soon as conditions became

somewhat settled, the work of enlightening the outside world was taken up.

So it was also following the "revolution of the national uprising," as the Nazis term their victory. One of their first acts on coming to power was to establish the "Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda" under Dr. Joseph Goebbels. The German Treasury's annual statement for the fiscal year ending in 1933 seems to show that this ministry expended in the first months of its existence the very considerable sum of 18,200,000 marks for propaganda abroad. Yet in the face of this, and despite the fact that Nazi propaganda is being carried on vigorously in many countries, it has been repeatedly denied officially that anything of the kind is happening.

In addition to their firm conviction of their *geschichtliche Sendung*, the Germans are also convinced that their isolation during the World War and now was and is due solely to foreign countries' envy of a superior people, and this feeling is actually stronger today than ever before. One finds it expressed even in school primers, and it is a constantly recurring refrain in the newspapers and all speeches. The *Kampflied* (battle song) of the Hessian Storm Troops (SA) begins thus:

"A new morning dawned for us, awakened folk, by envy surrounded."

(Although it has nothing to do directly with the subject under consideration, I quote further from the same song: "The day will dawn when we march. The flag will be unrolled in the morning's red light. Through green fields in column of fours the storm will rage around the gold of blond heads. And the same blood unites all. . . . With fist clenched on the flag-staff, the folk of a thousand victories will break the power of gold by the might of

blood." This, and scores of similar songs, contrast but poorly with the Germans' constant protestations of their ardent longing for peace.)

The other nations of the world naturally regard such an attitude of mind as arrogance, but the Germans' faith in their "mission" is so strong that this view never occurs to them. The Germans—and here is the explanation for their constant complaint that the world "does not understand them"—are a "peculiar people" in quite as high degree as the Jews on whom they have now turned with medieval ferocity. Count Hermann Keyserling, the Baltic-German philosopher, has termed them "a caste-folk, weaponless in the face of reality." Rarely is so much truth bound up in so few words. They go far to explain the present situation in Germany—to make clear the truth set forth by Prince Bülow (in "Imperial Germany," English translation, 1914): "Despite the abundance of merits and great qualities with which the German nation is endowed, political talent has been denied it."

III

The Germans live in a world which long ago ceased to exist for other peoples. The revolution of 1918 brought them for a time face to face with realities, but they are now back again in the days of Siegfried, the dragon slayer, and of those other stalwarts whose combats were fought man against man with spear, sword and mace. In those days there was a reason for "heroes." There is none in our times, when war has become a matter of technic and chemistry—when a single Fritz Haber, who discovered a method of securing nitrogen from the air and in that way made it possible for Germany to carry on the war further, is worth more than

a million heroes. (Haber, incidentally, was a Jew, and was thus deprived of all honors.)

But the men at the head of the "Third Reich" have decreed not only the resurrection of the "hero" and the "heroic manner of thought," but even also of a "heroic Christ," Who is presumably to be equipped with fitting weapons. Their bishops preach in brown uniforms from pulpits whose Cross of Christ is superimposed with a swastika, symbol of hatred for the race from which Christ sprang. The same symbol now adorns the spire of one church in Franconia and of another in Silesia. The Nazis, however, get around the difficulty by protesting that Christ was a "Nordic" and an "Aryan."

In the war years the Germans—although in far less degree than they were made to believe—were *belogen und betrogen* for the sake of saving the Fatherland from being crushed by foreign enemies. Today they are being *belogen und betrogen* for the sake of a political party, for its medieval and harebrained tenets, and for the greater glory of "statesmen" who demonstrated their statesmanship within a few weeks after they took office by making the whole civilized world question gravely whether its bitterest estimates of the Germans during the World War were not too generous.

But of all this few Germans have even the slightest knowledge. Those to whom some intimation of the true state of affairs has trickled through explain it as due to the outside world's "envy" of the perfection of the unique flowering of the "Nordic Aryans" in Germany. But some day the truth will come with the same shattering effect as in 1918. Some day a thousand things which the Germans are not permitted to know, and a thousand other things as to which their enslaved

—and in many cases shamefully subservient press—has misinformed them, will become known. Then the cry will once more be:

“We have been lied to and deceived!”

The German press was never much more than a simulacrum of a press. No German newspapers could remotely stand comparison even with the newspapers of the small countries to the North—with the *Svenska Dagbladet* or the *Dagens Nyheter* of Stockholm, the *Handels-och Sjöfartstidning* of Gothenburg, or the *Berlingske Tidende* of Copenhagen—to say nothing of the big dailies of England and America. There are few if any cities of 100,000 inhabitants in the United States that have not better newspapers than any ever published in Germany's chief cities. The only departments in which the German press made a respectable showing were the feuilleton and market departments. News reports were always inadequate and badly presented. It is true that the German press never enjoyed freedom of the press as this is known in Great Britain and America, but the restrictions on it in the decades before the war and afterwards up to about 1927 were on the whole inconsequential and can furnish no excuse for its lack of quality.

If all publishers had stood firmly together, they might conceivably have won a greater degree of freedom, but this they would not do. With negligible exceptions, the German newspapers were party organs. The Socialist editor would take no step which, although benefiting himself, would also benefit the German National editor, and the German National was willing to have his own freedom restricted if that was the price of restricting the freedom of the Socialist press. Some years ago one of our Western States enacted a press-muzzling law under which a com-

petent court could, after a hearing, suspend a newspaper. The first victim was an insignificant weekly, but the American Newspaper Publishers' Association sprang to the editor's defense, and bore all costs of carrying the case to the United States Supreme Court, which held the law unconstitutional and void. I wrote a report of the case at the time and submitted it to three leading liberal German newspapers. All three rejected it.

This attitude explains why the press in Hitlerite Germany not only offered no opposition but even made no protest against measures which reduced it to a mere vehicle for Nazi propaganda, and made it impossible for its readers to form even an approximate idea of what is going on either in Germany or abroad. It explains also why that press, with almost no exceptions, degenerated into such a servile, boot-licking institution that even Minister Goebbels has jeered publicly at these self-emasculating editors. One of the most prominent German journalists, well known abroad as correspondent for a formerly liberal newspaper, referred to the recently enacted “editors' law,” the most drastic throttling of the press since Metternich's day, as “the Magna Charta of the press.” In America and England one can still employ the hackneyed phrase of “the palladium of our liberties” when referring to our press, but the German press has become a sorry caricature, crooking the pregnant hinges of the knee, though kicks and insults follow fawning.

The Nazi rulers, nevertheless, have the effrontery to deny that they have abolished the freedom of the press. Last spring Minister of Justice Kerrl declared at a press reception that the freedom of the press would never be restricted by the government. Real freedom, however, he added, existed only “when it was dictated

by the welfare of the whole people," and it was dependent "on discipline." Criticism by the press was desired, but it must "be objective and serve only a single purpose." Wilhelm Weiss, head of the Nazis' press organization, said on the same occasion:

The press . . . has a right to exist only when it makes itself a part of the greater and more important organism of the nation and subjects itself to the government's will. The important thing for the German press and its working methods is not merely journalistic sensation and journalistic technic, but above all a characterful political creed.

The "organism of the nation" is the National Socialist party, which declares, precisely as did Louis XIV of France, "I am the state," and the "characterful political creed" is only the Nazi creed, which, as has been repeatedly asserted by various leaders of the party, will some day become the creed of the whole world—a prospect appalling to all freemen everywhere.

IV

Volumes could be filled with the bare recital of important happenings which the German press has not been permitted to report. Twelve hundred Protestant clergymen in America join in a protest against the persecution of the Jews in Germany. The Archbishop of Canterbury presides at a meeting attended by some fifty peers of Great Britain, a great number of members of Parliament, and other prominent men and women from all walks of life, and a resolution against the Nazis' anti-Semitic campaign of extermination is adopted unanimously. The Bishop of Chichester sends a dignified letter of protest to Ludwig Müller, Reich Bishop, against the excluding of baptized Jews

from salvation. The Archbishop of Canterbury refuses an invitation to attend the consecration of Bishop Müller. Not a single newspaper in Germany is permitted to report any of these important happenings.

The Regensburg *Anzeiger* publishes a protest of the Catholic Action against the arrest of two priests. It is suspended for three days. The *Bayerischer Kurier* reports the arrest of three priests. It is suspended for a week. Armed storm troopers (SA men) brutally assault hundreds of youths attending a congress of Roman Catholic apprentices and journeymen. The political police threaten arrest and prosecution of any person "spreading untrue reports about ill treatment" in connection with the congress. The *Taegliche Rundschau* of Berlin was finally killed by a series of suspensions, decreed because it tried to tell its readers objectively how independent thinking was being throttled in the universities and church.

The *Deutsche Zeitung* of Berlin republished from a foreign newspaper an article saying that the Italian Minister Balbo is a Jew, or half Jew. Hermann Goering, today the most powerful man in Germany next to Hitler, suspended the newspaper and ordered its editor interned in a concentration camp. This order was later revoked, but that it could have been issued throws further revealing light on what the Nazis regard as "genuine freedom of the press." Under the editors' law, in force on January 1, Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, has absolute power to dictate whom a newspaper may or may not employ. There is no appeal from his decision.

But the press is not merely forbidden to print this or that report. It is compelled also to print "news" furnished by the government, and frequently also official comments on such news. This practice was

introduced some years earlier by governments of the political Left—and was bitterly opposed by many of the newspapers that today vie with one another in fulsome flattery of the Nazi rulers and their press-gagging measures. Some of the fruits of this practice have been such as to make the judicious grieve and laugh at the same time.

By far the most astounding of these fruits was the official report that informed an amazed public that two enemy airplanes had flown over Berlin and dropped handbills assailing the government. Dubious as the story would have been in any event, it was rendered ridiculously so by the details furnished officially. The airplanes, the newspapers were compelled to report, had not been clearly observed because the day was foggy, and they had flown at a height of from a mile and a quarter to two miles. They were “of an unknown type,” and had disappeared at such a speed that they could not be followed. Despite the fog and the altitude at which they had flown, however, they had dropped their handbills with such amazing accuracy that these had landed precisely in the Wilhelmstrasse, where most government buildings are located, and on the Alexanderplatz, seat of the police prefecture.

When this “news” was communicated to the ambassador of a great power who is no longer in Berlin, he dropped his monocle—in itself a sign of great agitation—and ejaculated:

“A piece of incredible buffoonery!”

This was the reaction of all foreigners—but also of many, perhaps even most, Germans. The authorities had obviously overestimated the credulity of the people and underestimated their intelligence. The Germans know a good deal about military affairs. They know that an air-

plane flying over a mile high could hit a cathedral with a bomb only by chance, and the alleged accuracy with which small pieces of paper had been dropped from such a height was too much. In conversations with scores of Germans at the time I found only one who believed the story. But no one dared to express a doubt openly, for that would have meant the concentration camp, and the government’s purpose was achieved: willingness of the people to have heavy expenditures made for a great number of airplanes—the amount thus expended in the first eight months of the Nazis’ rule was almost twice the total for the preceding year—, readiness to coöperate in building gas-proof cellars, and more united support of Germany’s agitation for the right to possess anti-aircraft guns.

In December the press had to report that two Jewish aviators were stopped in England just as they were about to start for Germany in an airplane filled with handbills to be dropped in that country. This bit of news quite escaped the otherwise alert British newspapers.

The result of the muzzling of the press is that only that very small number of Germans who read foreign newspapers regularly have any idea of what is really happening in Germany or in the world at large, or of the attitude of the outside world toward Hitlerism. And a great part even of the Germans who do thus follow the foreign press have been so hypnotized by the dizzy pace which events have kept up, by the continuous round of celebrations, “heroic” speeches, military music, uniforms, processions, and forests of flags, and—by no means least—by the assiduously propagated assertion that the foreign press is entirely owned by Jews and served by liars, that they believe nothing they read in it.

My sons, who read German, English, Swedish, American and Danish newspapers regularly and French papers occasionally, return from visiting a German family who read only German papers, and report that every statement made by them about the feeling toward Germany in other countries has been met with the rejoinder, "*Sie irren sich*" (You are mistaken). Youths who were babes at the breast when I came to Germany try to "enlighten" me about the situation here and in the world at large, and will listen to no contradictions. Yet the readers of the London *Times*, to mention only one newspaper, know more about what is happening in the Third Reich than do all but a tiny minority of the Germans themselves.

In free countries the press, while it is the chief source of information, is not the only source. Hence freedom of speech and assembly were early recognized in truly enlightened lands as indispensable accompaniments of intelligent government and as furnishing that opportunity for control and criticism without which government degenerates into absolutism and dictatorship, and almost inevitably becomes corrupt. But such freedom, too, is dead in Hitler's Germany. Not only may no meetings of protest be held, but even small groups of dissentients meeting in private homes are hunted down relentlessly and imprisoned. As this is written, a number of persons have been arrested for congregating in the home of one of their number to listen to the Moscow broadcasting station. The country teems with informers. Even members of the SA and SS, the Nazis' military arm, have orders to keep watch on each other. At various times Dr. Goebbels and other party leaders have declared that, while the principles of National Socialism may not be criticized, other criticism is wel-

comed, provided it be "constructive." Such protestations are worth precisely as much as are assertions from the same high quarters that the German press now enjoys "genuine freedom." That is, they are worth nothing. An unguarded word in private conversation can mean the concentration camp. No opinion has any right to be held if it vary from that set forth by the masters of the Third Reich.

In a Hessian concentration camp the commandant read me the charges against some of the unfortunates confined there. One was:

"He declared that he was a Communist and would remain one."

"You ought to be glad that there are still a few brave men of character and moral courage left in Germany," I said to the commandant.

He froze. If I were a German citizen—"subject" is now the better word—I should still be in that camp.

V

There are few intelligent foreigners in Germany who, having lived there long enough to gain the confidence of a considerable number of Germans, do not know more about the general situation than is known by the Germans themselves, and, of course, more about the attitude of the outside world than is known by the Nazi leaders. If the members of any foreign colony in Berlin should tell all they know, a new concentration camp would have to be established for their German acquaintances who have relieved their minds by talking freely with men and women whom they felt they could trust. Significant in this connection is the great number of disrespectful anecdotes that circulate about the big men of the National Socialist party, and espe-

cially about Goering. But it is also significant that almost none of these anecdotes are directed against Hitler himself, who has taken a tremendous hold on the imaginations of the German people, including even many who regard his whole course as catastrophic.

Another important means of influencing opinion is the radio, and this, too, was taken over by the Nazis immediately after their accession. Since that time it has been made an instrument for broadcasting "heroic" speeches, military music, addresses and plays glorifying the "soldierly spirit," and the swapping of eulogies among the members of the Mutual Admiration Society composed of the chief leaders of the National Socialist movement. The character of the censorship was amusingly illustrated when King George addressed the World Economic Conference in London last summer. The address was recorded on wax in the Berlin broadcasting station for repetition for German hearers. The press announced:

"Since the Foreign Office has expressed no misgivings against broadcasting the King's speech, it requires now only the formal consent of the Propaganda Ministry."

Here, too, the Nazis are confident of their "historical mission." In an address last summer Dr. Goebbels said:

"I am convinced that what we are doing today is pioneering work for the whole civilized world, for the National Socialist world. . . . What we do today will in ten years be a model for the whole world, and the world will be guided by our radio-political work."

Further deterrents to telling or trying to learn the truth are the terrorism of club and revolver, and the defamation of all opponents who still retain some trace of moral courage and character.

There are many more of such Germans than the masters of the Third Reich believe, despite the results of the farcical "election" of November 12 last. The three million voters who ventured to vote against the government did so with the full knowledge that if they were discovered they would have to suffer severely for it. In the Berlin *Local-Anzeiger* Friedrich Hussong, who for years had no epithets quite bitter enough for Hitler, and who abused him with a pen dipped in vitriol, assailed all non-voters and all no-voters at the November election as "scoundrels," and similar denunciations appeared in many other papers—also mainly written by men who only a year earlier had denounced Hitler in the same terms.

In some places men and women who refused to go to the polls were paraded through the streets, wearing placards inscribed, "I did not vote. I am vile." In some places, notably certain Bavarian towns, non-voters were jailed. Among these were a number of Russellites who went to the polls but wrote on their ballots: "Jesus is our leader."

Uniformed SA men hunted down all Germans who had not voted early in the day, and all but compelled them to go to the polls. The daughter of a German in Berlin, herself a British subject, had to exhibit her British passport before two SA visitors would leave the house. Stories of marked ballots and other means of identifying voters are not true, but such methods were not required for people so thoroughly cowed and terrorized as are the Germans. The fact that about 95% of the unfortunates in concentration camps voted for the Nazi ticket shows how little the result of the election gave a true picture of the situation. But the masters of the state car

not understand why precisely this vote of the prisoners was greeted abroad with whoops of derision, for not only political sense but also a sense of the ridiculous has been denied them.

In one respect the German Empire—and the same was true of the now defunct Republic—enjoyed immeasurably more freedom than America has ever known. This was in the domain of higher education. “Academic freedom” was a reality, and it was this, in almost as great degree as the high standing of German scholarship, research and pedagogical science, that attracted students from all over the world. The Nazis abolished academic freedom at one blow. Henceforth German students and professors may have only one political creed, only one *Weltanschauung*—that of the Nazis. Educators whose names were known and honored in the whole world, among them men who had received Nobel Prizes, were thrown out of their chairs. The most recent and also one of the most distinguished of such men was Walter Schuecking, discharged from his chair in the University of Kiel last December. Schuecking, Germany’s leading authority on international law, was a member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, vice-president of the Institute of International Law, correspondent of the American Institute of International Law, president of the Union for International Understanding, chairman of the Society for the League of Nations and chairman of the German group of the Interparliamentary Union. He is a democrat, which finished the list of his offenses.

Every student must henceforth devote one day a week to what is euphoniously called “defense sport,” really military drill, and no instructor will henceforth be added to any faculty unless he has

served a specified time in either a labor camp or one of the Nazi military organizations. The Hitlerites cherish the idea that such service will do away with all class distinctions. Just what reason they have for believing that it will accomplish what a full hundred years of universal military service could not accomplish is not apparent. But the idea is in line with the hazy Nazi ideology in general.

VI

It must be borne in mind, if one is even to approximate to an understanding of the present régime, that it came into existence as a revolution of the lower middle class. “We who today stand at the head of the government do not come from the wealthy and educated class,” declared Dr. Goebbels at a Christmas celebration. The significance of the fact that Hitler never rose to higher rank than corporal during his four years of service at the front, seems to have been generally overlooked. The “revolution of the national uprising” was a non-coms’ revolution, in contrast to the overturn of November, 1918, which was a privates’ revolution. In the first flush of a successful mutiny privates are full of enthusiasm and confidence, but when their enthusiasms are abraded on the sharp rocks of experience they begin to realize that they need help. And thus the cabinets of the Republic came gradually to contain ever more men whose knowledge and experience were not bounded by the boundaries of their country. But the non-coms—and the fact that there are a few former commissioned officers among their adherents does not alter the situation, for shoulder-straps do not necessarily bring character and wisdom—combine inadequate and undigested knowledge with the spirit of

the barracks room. They still picture their subjects as the same privates at whom they were accustomed to bark their commands.

If they knew history better, or, rather, if they knew how to interpret history better, they would know that wiser men than they, believing that a régime of oppression and terror can have permanence, deceived themselves. In the summer of 1819, when democratic sentiment among the German university students had become menacing, and the dramatist Kotzebue had been murdered by the student Sands at Jena, Metternich called a conference at Karlsbad of representatives of Prussia and other German states, and induced them to join in a number of proposals to the Bundestag, which adopted them unanimously on September 20 of the same year. These laws, known as the Karlsbad Decrees, provided for a sharp control of the universities, including the manner of instruction, discipline and student organizations, by special curators or plenipotentiaries of the various States, and for a strict censorship of daily newspapers and periodical publications, as well as of all books or pamphlets containing less than 160 pages.

Commenting on his work, Metternich declared that he had done in three weeks what thirty years of revolution could not accomplish.

The boast has a familiar sound to one familiar with the boastful pronouncements of the Nazis.

Thirty years later Metternich fled to London to save his life. Treitschke, the great German historian, an extreme chauvinist and assuredly no lover of democracy, wrote of him:

"He had no idea how highly this idealist nation valued freedom of thought, and how terribly it must be hurt by an attack on the press and the universities."

The Nazi leaders declare that their Third Reich will endure "forever." If history has any meaning, and if all human experience is not a lie, they are mistaken by a good many millennia. The end will come sooner than horrified civilization, deceived by the "election" of November 12 and unaware of the hidden currents in Germany, as yet dares to hope. The only thing uncertain is whether the end will come through revolution or through war.

If it be war, that will also be the end of Germany.

THE PLIGHT OF THE DOCTOR

BY GEORGE W. ASPINWALL

THE practice of medicine is no longer lucrative. The average family or neighborhood doctor is not earning a living. Some have abandoned their profession for other fields. Others, more determined or more hopeful, have been accepting \$15 weekly from the unemployment relief funds.

Recently a friend asked me for \$2 for a fund to save a physician from being evicted from his home for non-payment of rent. There are cases on record of physicians who have committed suicide because they were unable to continue the struggle against adverse conditions.

The situation has been growing worse for ten years and has become acute in the last four years. Physicians throughout the United States have been affected, but those in New York State and particularly in New York City seem to be in the worst situation.

The doctor, with no income except that from the practice of medicine, is barely able to pay even office expenses. His savings have disappeared, his life insurance has been cancelled in whole or in part, his home and office help has been discharged, and every economy possible put into effect, and still he cannot make ends meet.

There are exceptions, of course, and a few are making no complaint, but the rank and file are either bankrupt or close to it. Many of them, who daily give free medical attention to patients in so-called free clinics, are in such financial straits that

they should be the receivers rather than the givers of alms.

Visiting physicians on hospital staffs are advising internes against entering private practice because it will be impossible for them to earn a decent living in an already over-crowded field. The young men are being urged to remain internes as long as possible and then to seek positions in the Public Health Service, Army or Navy rather than attempt to establish a private practice.

Many doctors believe it will be necessary to suspend undergraduate medical teaching for at least twelve years and use medical colleges for post-graduate education so that doctors now in practice may become better prepared to take their places in a reorganized medical edifice of the near future.

Changes of vast import in the medical structure are freely predicted. There is an ever-growing tendency to remove health work from the private doctor to centralized bureaux. Municipal, State and Federal governments constantly are assuming more of the responsibility of maintaining the public health.

The socialization of the practice of medicine is held by many leaders of thought to be well within the realm of probability. The rank and file, harassed by expenses in excess of their income, will certainly welcome a change. To most of them, the prospect of serving a community medical group with a fair salary, an opportunity for post-

graduate study, an annual vacation and retirement pay, seem Utopian in comparison with their present plight.

The crux of the matter is that while colleges have been turning out an ever-increasing crop of new doctors each year the number of patients from whom a physician can collect a fee has been decreasing. Recently the point has been reached where there are not enough paying patients to support the doctors in private practice.

II

From 1790 to 1880 the nation's population increased 34% every ten years. Then a declining birthrate, curtailment of immigration and other factors slowed down the rate of increase, and in ten years from 1920 to 1930 the population increase was only 16%. But with doctors the story has been a wholly different one. Their number has been increasing at an ever-mounting rate. From 1909 to 1931, 22,000 physicians joined those already in practice. Of these 22,000 6,880 entered practice in the four years from 1927 to 1931. It is estimated that an additional 4,500 joined their colleagues in the one year ending December, 1933.

There are approximately 142,000 physicians in the United States and a population of 123,000,000, according to the census of 1930. If every person in the nation were a paying patient, each doctor would have 929 paying patients and would count himself a lucky man. But physicians have been losing paying patients more rapidly than the statistically-inclined can compute.

Osteopathy, not a serious competitor a few years ago, now collects \$42,000,000 a year. This money which once went to the family doctor now is collected by 8,000 osteopaths. Chiropractors each year take about \$63,000,000, which formerly went to

neighborhood doctors. There are about 3,000 naturopaths in the field and about 10,000 Christian Science practitioners.

It is probable that the family doctor would not complain if his only losses were through competition. The whole medical fraternity seems supremely confident of their profession and eager to meet competition. But there are other ways in which the family doctor has been losing business and about which he complains bitterly.

For instance, the number of persons attending so-called free clinics has increased 300% in the last ten years. While the family physician has been losing paying patients to all sorts of new health cults, the numbers of patients whom he is expected to treat free of charge have been mounting at an almost incredible rate. Here is the chief cause of the shrinkage in the family doctor's pocketbook.

To procure medical attention without paying for it has become a national habit. The doctors say it has assumed the proportions of a national mania. A man, who would not dream of asking a grocer for a free loaf of bread or a clothier for a free hat, has no hesitancy in asking his family physician how and where to procure free medical attention.

And where this citizen, having a good job and probably some money in the bank, would have great difficulty in procuring free groceries or headgear, he has no difficulty in procuring free medical attention in clinics. Upon his first application for free food or clothes he would be questioned, investigated and refused by the charitable agency to which he applies. But he may walk into a free clinic and be given medical service with virtually no questions asked and at only a pittance of a charge.

The trend of the people toward free medical agencies has spread even to the

public schools. From kindergarten to high school, pupils are instructed concerning all sorts of free agencies for examinations and treatments of different kinds. Pupils leave school with the idea that the maintenance of health and the correction of disease are matters which need involve no expense.

A glance at the facts will reveal what has happened to bring about this extraordinary situation. Looking back to not so many years ago we find that the doctor himself started the custom of giving free medical attention to the sick poor. They came to his office, asked for treatment, said they were unable to pay, and were given attention without charge.

The first formal recognition by the doctor of this custom of treating the poor free came when the doctor set aside certain hours when he would receive the poor. He had to do this to have time to attend paying patients, as the poor came in ever-increasing numbers. Their numbers increased so much, in fact, that the doctors found it necessary to segregate the sick poor in clinics.

That was the foundation of the trouble which today has become the family doctor's greatest problem—the organization of the first free clinics. Hospitals were built around these free clinics and found support from public contributions. Staffs were employed at salaries, the doctors continued treating the poor free of charge, and the custom of giving free medical service developed into an organized business.

At first, the free clinic was what the name implies. No charge of any kind was made to patients. But later small fees were accepted and finally fees of ten, twenty-five and fifty cents were imposed. Even the poor could afford that, reasoned the heads of hospitals. There were electric bills to be paid, nurses' wages to be met and other expenses, except for the doctors' services.

It is now customary even in hospitals maintained by public and private contributions to make small charges for medical service and drugs in the so-called free clinics. But it never has become customary for the doctor to be paid for his work in these clinics. As a matter of fact, many doctors have been dismissed from hospital staffs for violating the rule which forbids a doctor from inviting a clinic patient to become his private patient.

And once a free patient always a free patient. Doctors have observed that they rarely ever are visited again by a patient after that patient has acquired the free clinic habit. The patient reasons that he was a fool, indeed, ever to have paid doctor's bills. "With free treatment available just around the corner?" And most of those who first entered free clinics because of the economic depression never again will patronize their family doctor. They have joined the nation's vast army of free patients, and to what a size that army will grow no one can tell.

There are 500,000 persons in this country being treated in free clinics each day. It may be assumed that the attention given the average patient is worth a minimum of \$2, as this attention is exactly what the patient has been getting from his family doctor. As in all free clinics the doctors donate their services, it may truthfully be said that the doctors are donating \$1,000,000 daily to the sick poor and those who pretend poverty to procure free medical service.

III

The public generally seems to think that the sick poor are the doctor's problem, that he always has treated the poor free, and should continue to do so. But the doctors hold a different view. They believe

that the sick poor are a responsibility which the whole community must bear.

It is estimated that about 1% of our population is sick all the time. Thus there are 1,230,000 persons in need of medical attention every day. Doctors treat 500,000 of these sick free of charge. (This half million is the daily free clinic attendance.) After the 500,000 non-paying patients are attended to there are 730,000 patients who may be treated by private doctors and who may be billed for services rendered.

But records show that 35% of the 730,000 (or 225,500) do not pay their bills. If the remaining 65% (or 474,000) paying patients are divided among 142,000 family doctors in practice, each would have an average of slightly more than three patients a day.

However, this reckoning does not take into consideration the large numbers treated by others than family doctors, the osteopaths, chiropractors, *et al.* The figures show clearly to what extent the free medical treatment habit has gone. With 500,000 treated in free clinics and 255,000 failing to pay doctor's bills, you have a total of 755,000 who receive medical treatment each day without paying, and only 474,000 who pay for medical treatment. In other words, slightly more than two-thirds of the nation's sick are on the free list.

Uncle Sam lopped off a big part of the doctor's income when Congress enacted the laws creating a Federal organization to care for World War veterans. During and after the war enormous hospitals were erected, medical units installed, and Uncle Sam blossomed forth as a doctor on a big scale.

Lobbyists got busy in Congress, additional legislation was enacted letting down bars, and within a short time a veteran could procure from the United States government free medical service for almost

any kind of trouble, from having a tooth extracted to an appendectomy.

Every time a veteran received free medical service some neighborhood doctor lost a fee. But there was no protest from the doctors even though the 142,000 practicing physicians with their families form a group of 600,000 persons. The expense of giving medical care to veterans is paid by the Federal government and of course the 142,000 physicians contribute their share of this expense in the course of regular tax payments.

Shortly after his inauguration, President Roosevelt, in his effort to balance the budget, convinced Congress that the appropriation for medical care for veterans should be reduced. The appropriation was reduced, and now a veteran is not entitled to free medical service unless his infirmity resulted from illness or injury incurred while serving in the armed forces of the nation.

A survey has shown that about 60% of the veterans being given free medical care were suffering from infirmities of non-service origin. Approximately 40% of the veterans will continue to receive free medical aid from the Federal government. And if the doctors' prediction comes true, the 60% not entitled to free care from Uncle Sam will procure it from the numerous agencies which make no charge for medical service.

The family physicians have no expectation of getting business from World War patients any time in the future. Almost without exception, these former soldiers have joined the army of people who never expect to pay another doctor's bill.

The pay clinic is another irritating thorn in the doctor's side. The free clinic was established to give free care to the poor. The pay clinic, of more recent birth, was established to give medical care to the middle-

class. There are various kinds of pay clinics. Some are connected with medical colleges, others are surreptitiously maintained by hospitals. The main excuse for the creation of the pay clinic was to help the middle-class man and woman—people with a wage of from \$25 to \$50 weekly. It was contended that the middle-classes could not procure proper medical attention at a price they could afford to pay.

With the establishment of pay clinics another large group of patients left the family physician, for the pay clinics offered a competition difficult for the private doctor to meet. The word clinic, long associated in the public mind with free medical care, indicated to Mr. and Mrs. Citizen cheaper medical service than the family doctor had to offer. Also, these large halls of healing with splendid and complete equipment, seemed more attractive than the office of the family doctor.

Opinions concerning pay clinics vary widely, and today these clinics are the subject of one of the most bitter discussions in the history of the medical profession. Pay clinics are frankly money-making ventures, but as in the case of the free clinics the doctors who serve in the pay clinics receive nothing for their work.

The doctors contend that they give as efficient and economical service as the pay clinics offer. The entrance fee to a pay clinic is small but the patient finds that he must pay many other fees. There are charges when a patient is referred from one department to another, and there are charges for consultations and for laboratory work.

Opponents of pay clinics assert that these clinics have shown themselves not superior but greatly inferior to the private doctor in serving the middle-class. Records of patients treated unsuccessfully in pay clinics are cited. There are charges against

the clinics for incorrect diagnosis and badly managed cases. It is asserted that statistics show that the diagnostic acumen of pay clinics is no better and many times is inferior to that of other institutions when checked by autopsy findings.

But both proponents and opponents admit that the pay clinics are steadily making inroads upon the practice of the private doctor, whose financial condition can withstand no additional drain. The fight revolving around the pay clinics within the medical fraternity may become the foundation upon which a new medical structure will be built.

Enactment of industrial accident compensation legislation has been a boon to many, but it has worked hardship on the family doctor by taking away one of his important sources of income. Before this law became effective a neighborhood doctor usually treated from four to six industrial accident cases monthly. His fees for this work would average a total of from \$100 to \$200 a month.

The law originally provided that the employer should have the privilege of naming the doctor to treat injury cases. Under this provision the family doctor expected to continue receiving industrial cases. But in a short time insurance companies assumed the privilege of selecting physicians for the work. Both the employer and insurance companies were interested in procuring medical service at the lowest cost, and by sending all patients to one doctor special rates could be fixed.

It was not long before virtually all industrial accident cases were diverted from family doctors to a small group of physicians working with the insurance companies. Every effort to have this work scattered among neighborhood or family physicians has failed. The law was amended giving an injured employé the

right to select his own physician, but the employé usually is ignorant of his rights, is easily influenced by the insurance company, and the injury cases continue to go to the doctors with whom the company has a working arrangement. The family doctor again is the loser.

IV

It may seem that family doctors have been sitting supinely in their offices while important groups of their patients were being taken away. It is true that as a general rule they have not been so active as they might have been in protecting themselves. But private physicians, working both as individuals and through their various organizations, have made efforts to avoid being deprived of their income. So far, their efforts have resulted in failure or only partial success.

One of the first attempts of the private physician to safeguard his income was a move to prevent free clinics giving medical aid to persons able to pay for treatment. Pleading poverty to escape a doctor's bill is regarded as plain false pretense. And the doctors succeeded in having a law enacted making it a misdemeanor for a person to accept charity if able to pay for medical attention. The law has not been effective. Many physicians with twenty-five years' experience in free clinics in New York City cannot remember a clinic patient who has been arrested or convicted for violating this law, though the law, as everyone knows, is violated scores of times every day.

Every clinic is supposed to maintain a social service department to bar those not entitled to treatment in the clinic. If these social service departments operated efficiently, large numbers of patients able to pay for treatment would not be admitted

and would be forced to visit a neighborhood doctor and pay for treatment. But the social service departments either do not function at all or function very ineffectively in excluding those unlawfully seeking charity. The heads of hospitals are not conscientious in seeing that the law is observed, and their indifference is reflected throughout the hospital.

Many hospitals encourage patients to use free clinics. The dimes, quarters and half-dollars paid to the free clinics by patients do not go to the doctors who give treatment but toward the hospital's expenses. When the income from a free clinic exceeds its budgetary requirements, the profit is devoted to some other hospital activity. The doctor giving his services free in the clinics seems helpless to prevent the hospital making a profit on his labor.

An attempt to correct this situation was made at the last assembly of the New York State legislature. A measure known as the Crawford bill was introduced imposing a fine on a hospital supported by public or private contributions for accepting money from patients treated in a free clinic. If this bill had become a law every patient in a free clinic would have become an expense rather than a source of revenue to a hospital. Hospitals would have stopped encouraging free clinics patronage and some clinics would have been closed. But the bill was defeated.

A second bill was introduced providing that a person able to walk and seeking free medical care must apply at a central registration bureau where his claim for charity would be investigated before he was sent to a free clinic for treatment. This measure also was defeated.

Hospitals maintained a lobby against the Crawford bill. Family doctors, alone and in small groups, tried to convince the legislators that the bill should be passed. The

doctors were told bluntly that few physicians take part in primary contests, that only about a third of the physicians in the State register for voting, and that therefore they had no claim on the legislators and no power to procure enactment of the law. The bills were defeated but the family doctors who would have benefited by their enactment had their eyes opened. The result of their mission to Albany is that the doctors are forming political organizations with the intention of making a fight. The family doctor never has been politically important. He has been too busy with his practice to find time for meddling in politics. But it seems that now, when he cannot earn enough money to support his family, he may meddle politically a bit.

The family doctors of not only New York State but throughout the country are sufficiently numerous with their families and friends to wield a powerful politi-

cal influence if they should band together under proper leadership to battle with the ballot for self-preservation.

It is conceivable that the family doctors of New York State could push a bill similar to the Crawford one through their State Legislature. And it is not improbable that the family doctors of the nation could induce Congress to see that Uncle Sam takes the M.D. off his door. There are quite a few members of Congress who believe that World War veterans should be treated in hospitals in their own State by their home-town physicians, and that these physicians should be paid by the Federal government.

There certainly is merit in the contention of the doctors that they should be paid for treating the poor. The poor must have medical treatment and the treatment must be free, but the bill should be shared by the community.

ARE SMALL TOWNS DOOMED?

BY A VILLAGE TRUSTEE

BROWN & HARDY is one of the most progressive business firms in my town of 1,100 people. In 1926 it did a gross business of more than \$40,000; yet recently, in my home, Mr. Hardy said, "There is no hope for the small towns of America. They are doomed."

Being a member of the board of three trustees for my town, this statement interested me very much indeed, since I am in a measure responsible for the welfare of my village. After listening to Mr. Hardy's reasons for his views, and finding them logical and well thought out, I made further investigations. Summed up, the results of these investigations indicate that what is taking place in my town is paralleled by the trends in thousands of others.

There are in the United States 53,111 towns of less than 1,000 inhabitants, the average being about 500. There are 3,100 averaging about 1,500 in population. Thus, in 56,211 villages approximately 39,000,000 of our people reside, or about one-third of our entire population.

It has been generally accepted that the small towns and villages of America, together with the farms, represented the real strength, the support, and the reserve power of the nation. The people in them neither climbed to the heights nor descended to the depths. They were steady, moderately conservative, industrious, independent, and frugal. Few of them ever appeared on the relief rolls, and practi-

cally all of them were prepared for the future.

The average small town in America never expected any great volume of business, being content with reasonable comforts and reasonable profits. Never in a furor of industrial expansion or excitement, they maintained an even keel, progressing safely and soundly.

In former years, almost without exception, the business sections of the average small town were about adequate to the needs. These business sections were kept in a good state of repair, decently painted, neat, clean, and inviting. Seldom would an empty store room be found. The men engaged in business in these localities did not grow fabulously rich, but through careful management and good service—which often meant long hours—many of them became comfortably well off.

It came to be an axiom that the business section of a town reflected the kind of citizens therein. The progressiveness, alertness, and quality of service exhibited by the business men of a town indicated the desirability of the place as a home, and also as a place where opportunity might exist. These factors had much to do with the location of small industries in such towns.

Almost unnoticed and certainly without being understood, a change has been coming over the small town situation. A process of decay has set in; and driving through the country now, especially in

the Middle West, one frequently comes upon the shells of communities that once were towns.

Observing these places one seems to sense a break in the sturdy and proud spirit which once held them up as a bulwark of the nation. This tendency is most noticeable in the business districts; where once a healthy activity could be noted one now observes a dull lethargy. There are few people on the streets, the store fronts look discouraged and uninviting; persons going from place to place mope instead of hurrying briskly; upon the faces of merchants and business men has settled a dull apathy to replace the once bright eagerness, while conversation with them brings forth only grave apprehension for the future.

Within the stores one finds conditions exactly matching this spirit. The old confidence, the old expectancy have vanished. Beyond a doubt the once vibrant, living, wholesome, and potent spirit of the small town is very ill—if not dead.

II

In searching out reasons for this very evident decay the first and most natural thought is, "Charge it to the depression." However, many things have been charged to the depression which do not belong there. It has been a handy peg upon which to hang all of our troubles. Of course, small towns have suffered from the economic tangle through which the nation has been struggling. But small towns have before experienced similar periods and come through them without loss of spirit or confidence in the future. What is going on now in these small places is entirely different, and it began long before the depression struck. Forces are at work which have little or no connection with

the economic upheaval which brought about depression times, forces that are basic and fundamental in character, attacking the very roots of small town life; and when a town, like a plant, begins to decay at the roots something more than superficial remedies is required.

The blight of the small town began more than a decade ago; but not until about 1926 did the ravages become so apparent that thinking people in these small centers began to take note of them. In that year, as stated above, one furniture house in my town of 1,100 people did more than \$40,000 gross business. Since that time, and including the pre-depression years of 1927, 1928, and 1929, there has been a steady decline in that firm's business. The same has been true of every other business in our town. Investigation in small towns elsewhere reveals the same thing happening.

Because my town is representative, and since as one of its trustees I am in position to know intimate facts regarding it, a brief survey of what is going on here will be enlightening as to what is taking place in practically every small town in the country.

Study of the Retail Distribution Summary for the United States, based upon the Fifteenth Census taken in 1930, will reveal many surprising facts. The government statisticians have separated retail trade into towns having more than 10,000 population and those having less. But even under this classification we come upon this startling set of facts: Towns below 10,000 in population account for 52% of the entire population in the United States. They also account for 45% of the entire number of retail establishments. Yet, with this population and this number of stores, they do but 30% of the total volume of retail business.

We know also that 26% of the total population is rural. This, taken with the 52% residing in small towns below 10,000 leaves 22% for the towns in the bracket above 10,000.

We then find that centers of population accounting for but 22% of the entire number of people actually do 70% of the total retail business.

Other interesting figures reveal this fact: In these larger towns, those above 10,000, we find a total of approximately 850,000 retail stores. There is the additional and astounding fact that the total population in cities above 10,000 provides only 32 customers for each store; yet, in spite of this, the larger town stores average more than \$40,000 gross business a year, while the smaller town stores, with almost three times as many potential customers, average but slightly over \$21,000 gross.

The only inference which can be drawn from these surprising figures is that a large volume of business which once went to the small town retail store is now finding its way into the stores of the larger cities.

Not only the people in the smaller towns but also the country people, who once used these villages as trading centers, are now traveling to the larger places to do their buying.

It must be remembered that the \$21,000 gross business done by stores located in towns of less than 10,000 is an average. Some exceed that figure but many of them fall far below it; this is especially so in the towns grading down to 2,500 population or less.

This means that a great number of these retail establishments are barely existing, and it explains the increasing number of empty store rooms and bankrupt concerns so plentiful these days in towns of small size.

III

The government Retail Distribution Summary mentioned above also reveals that there are some 770,000 stores in the country doing less than \$12,000 gross business yearly. In fact, the average is only \$5,500 a store, while 419,000 of the total number average less than \$2,500 a store. This means that 419,000 stores do only 2% of the total retail business in the United States, while 50% of the whole number do only 8.6%. Many of these struggling stores are located in towns of less than 10,000 population, and no small part of the reason for their condition will be found in the figures which show these communities doing but 30% as against the 70% of retail volume now concentrated in the larger centers.

When we consider the case of the really small towns, those having a population of 1,200 or less, the situation becomes tragic. In the past, these villages all accumulated their share of business and were thriving commercial centers, even though small. As a result, they were prosperous and pleasant places to live in: progressive, clean, ambitious, and productive of much of the best in America. Commerce and trade are the life blood of any community, and these small villages prospered so long as there was a rich flow of business running through them. With the loss of that sustaining power, a kind of decay has set in which attacks all that was best and desirable in these small centers.

The results of the fundamental change taking place in small town American life can, perhaps, best be shown by presenting a brief, thumb-nail picture of my own town.

As set down heretofore, we are a village of 1,100 people in the midst of a rich farming country. The trade area surround-

ing us is served by post-office rural delivery routes, which number some 500 patrons.

In 1926 it was a thriving and busy town. It had several manufacturing plants, good schools, five churches, and the usual number of business houses. The majority of the people were prosperous and happy. That was the year the local furniture business grossed over \$40,000.

From that time on the decay began to develop, and the forces which seem destined to destroy small town life as we have known it in the past became active. The depression which came in 1929 really had nothing to do with this.

The principal cause of the difficulties then beginning for this small town was the completion of an improved highway to a city of 115,000 people, located some twenty-five miles away. With the prosperity achieved in our town the people thereof purchased automobiles, and in these traveled to the larger city to buy the greater portion of all the things they wanted or required. As this trend developed the local stores felt the pinch and it was necessary for them to reduce their own stocks. Thus it was not long before the rural people discovered they could no longer find in our town the varieties and selections desired, and they too, being possessed of easy transportation, wended their way to the larger town to make their purchases. So, another crimp was put in the volume of local business, and the retailers of the town retrenched still further. And as they retrenched more and more business left them more and more until at the present time a deplorable situation exists.

There are 275 families in our town. The property valuation for taxation purposes is approximately \$1,000,000. The average earnings of these 275 families is \$720 a year; thus the entire income in one year

for the town approximates \$198,000. These 275 families have a fixed expense for light, water, taxes, insurance, and automobile licenses of \$47,000. This amount, deducted from the earnings, leaves \$151,000 for other purposes. Let us be generous and say that two-thirds of this amount is spent with the dealers and business men in the town. We therefore have slightly over \$100,000 to be expended. Now, on checking over the number of businesses which do not produce, but which exist through selling merchandise or service to the people, I find they number eighty in this small town. Therefore, we have an average of \$1,258 as gross business to be received by each of these business men from the people of our town.

Within the trading area outside there are some 500 families who, it is estimated, spend approximately \$500 a year, or \$250,000. Liberal estimates can account for but half that amount spent in our town, or \$125,000. This sum, divided among the eighty business establishments, amounts to \$1,562.50 for each. Totalling, we find that on an average the business men of our town can count upon less than \$3,000 gross annually. No ordinary retail business can exist upon that volume. This process has continued until the efficiency and quality of service rendered by the small town stores has deteriorated to the point where they can no longer expect support from their trading area. Improved highways and automotive travel are largely responsible for this condition. However, there are additional reasons.

Recently, the Chamber of Commerce in the big town near us issued a statement in which it was claimed that more than 50% of that town's retail business was drawn from the small towns and the rural districts surrounding it. Realizing the ease with which this business can be pulled in,

many of the stores of the larger town maintain a continual advertising bombardment of the people in surrounding small towns to entice them away from home to buy. Newspapers from that city cover our town, and our people are reached in that way through newspaper advertising. At frequent intervals these larger stores put on special sales and on such occasions circularize the whole village by means of carriers or from airplanes. The result of this is a constantly increasing volume of business going to the large town and away from the small one.

Customers, of course, cannot be blamed for going where stocks are larger and selections better. Recognizing this, the small town dealers complain they cannot afford to carry complete and heavy stocks which are not warranted by the volume of trade done. Thus customers and dealers have arrived at an impasse. The customers cannot obtain what they want, and because they do not come to buy, the small town dealer cannot afford to stock his store adequately.

We are not blaming any one for this condition. It is simply a result of the evolution of the times; but unless something is done to alter these trends, the small town as we have known it in the past is definitely doomed. When that day comes and finds the bulk of retail business in small towns ruined, the desirability of such places for homes will be gone also. What this will mean, or what effect it will have on the life of at least a third of our population, only time can tell.

IV

A study of the figures quoted above will indicate there are too many businesses in our small town asking for a division of the money earned and spent here. Instead

of a total of eighty non-productive businesses expecting to live off the earnings of this community there should not be over thirty. This would mean that instead of a yearly gross of \$3,000 the smaller number of businesses could expect nearly three times as much.

The solution I am about to offer will undoubtedly be held impractical, but nevertheless I see no other way out of their difficulties for these small trade centers. Since it is impossible for these business men to arrive at a solution among themselves, it is my belief that they should regard all of their businesses as one, the purpose of which is to promote and maintain the welfare of their town. Adopting this view, they should then appoint or hire a general manager whose job it would be to coördinate all of the business in the town, eliminate the unnecessary parts of it, and remove all duplication of effort.

Small town dealers have been guilty of unwise practices which have brought no relief from their troubles, but instead have complicated them. There is a great deal of foolish competition carried on among them which must be eliminated if they are ever again to serve their communities adequately. As the volume of trade formerly theirs was diverted to the larger centers, many of these small retailers added lines, thus going into direct competition with one another and making it increasingly difficult for many of them to maintain ample stocks.

For instance, consider the radio trade. In my town one or two dealers would have been sufficient and these would have been able to earn a profit. However, when the radio boom came on no less than six local men were found handling radios. At the present time we have five dealers trying to sell electric refrigerators, and as many who will sell you an electric

sweeper, or an electric washing machine. The same thing has happened in the older lines. Our community could support one well-stocked shoe store; instead we have four bidding for the shoe business, and as a result none of them is able to carry a satisfactory stock. Thus most of the shoe business naturally goes to the larger town. The same thing is true of men's furnishings and women's wear. A similar situation exists in the food field and likewise in the filling station business. At present we have five grocery stores with several wagon men covering the town frequently. One or two good grocery stores would be enough. We have five filling stations in addition to the garages, when two would be sufficient.

The proof of this may be found in the drug field. Here we have but two stores, both good and both prosperous.

Just so long as the limited volume of trade possible under present conditions must be spread among eighty different

bidders there will be increasing dissatisfaction with the town as a trade center and a consequent loss of volume. The only solution, therefore, is a reduction in the number of bidders and the elimination of unprofitable competition.

When this is accomplished, and the number of stores reduced to actual needs, then each store will be able to carry and maintain stocks which will attract not only the people of our own town but those from its surrounding trade area. No one really wishes to drive twenty or thirty miles to purchase the ordinary requirements of life. If these could be secured right at home the trade would remain there. The job is to find a way to make the stores of our local community attractive and efficient. Only by so doing can a volume of business sufficient to enable small town stores to exist be maintained. And only through the maintenance of this life-giving flow of business can the small town escape ultimate doom.

THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR MYTH

BY GEORGE E. SOKOLSKY

THE snows of Siberia afford statesmen a suitable stage for positive and truculent declamations on the inevitability of war between Russia and Japan. With the climate fifty below, it is possible for Araki and Hayashi in Japan and Voroshiloff and Bluecher in Russia to threaten one another like Chinese medieval warlords hoping to end a battle by execration without fighting. The simple truth is that they cannot fight. Their battlefields are snowed-under; their soldiers would be frozen; their paths are impassable; their rivers are solid ice. Winter is the time for violent speeches, but when spring comes, the mood for bloodshed is generally tempered by the thought of possible defeat.

Among realistic peoples, wars are projected when both sides anticipate victory. The Russians, Japanese, and even the Chinese are realists. No matter how much they may dislike one another, they avoid conflict when it is obviously clear from the beginning that there is not the slightest chance of success. They fight only when they are sure of winning. Thus the Japanese took Manchuria, 10% of China's national domain, because there was nobody strong enough to stop them. General Chiang Kai-shek, who controls China's national army, never resisted the Japanese at Shanghai, because he wanted to maintain his army as a fighting unit against Chinese Communists, whom he dislikes even more than he does the Japan-

ese. The Nineteenth Route Army put up a brave battle, and was virtually destroyed, but it was only a romantic gesture.

Similarly, when the Japanese were mopping up Manchuria between 1931-33, Soviet Russia offered no resistance, and did not even protect her own property, the Chinese Eastern Railroad. It would not have made sense to resist Japan in those days, for the Japanese were bent on having Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia. The great statesmen of Europe were regularly declaiming about Soviet Russia going to war with Japan over Manchuria, and even in the United States, unbelievable as it may seem, great newspapers published large headlines about the inevitable war between the two countries. But nothing happened. The Russians sat back and watched Japan consolidate a new Empire in Manchuria, because, at that time, Russia could not fight Japan with any prospect of success.

Since we recognized Soviet Russia, the prospective "inevitable" war in the Pacific has become front page news, not only in Russia and Japan, but in the United States and most European countries. It is assumed that such a war is inevitable, because both countries have been preparing for it. The Japanese cannot believe that the Russians will tolerate a Japanese Empire in Manchuria; the Russians cannot believe that the Japanese will not attempt to add Vladivostok and the Maritime Provinces of Siberia to the constantly

increasing Japanese Empire. Each side anticipates the purposes of the other, while both shout that they love peace more than anything.

While the League of Nations and Secretary of State Stimson were irritating themselves into a white heat over Japan's aggressions in Manchuria, the Russians were silent. Japan moved her first line of defense from near Mukden to the Siberian border, about 450 miles, and Russia remained mum. Japanese troops marched straight up to the border and the Russians never complained as long as the Japanese did not cross the border. Finally, the new state of Manchukuo was founded; the Japanese took over the Manchurian railroads, reorganized them so that they became instruments of Japanese economic and military imperialism, and still Russia was silent, even though this neutralized the value of Russia's Chinese Eastern Railway and wiped out the significance of Vladivostok as a port.

In fact, Russia's policy throughout the more aggressive phases of Japanese aggression in Manchuria was so quiescent that it was not at all surprising that Russia should have offered to sell the Chinese Eastern Railway to Japan. In a word, Soviet Russia, as a realistic country, decided that as long as it was not possible to be victorious over Japan, she might just as well rid herself of all her interests in Manchuria and close that chapter in Russian history.

II

It was only when Soviet Russia became reasonably sure of recognition by the United States that the Russian policy toward Japan became more virulent and the Japanese responded by ardent war propaganda. Both countries stirred their

peoples to be ready for any malevolent act of the prospective enemy. The politicians in both countries prepared their people for what the statesmen like to call "eventualities." In Japan this oratorical activity played directly into the hands of the militarists who were losing their hold on the people because there was no war in sight. They brought a war into high visibility and put through the Diet a budget, of which 40% was for preparedness. In Soviet Russia the prospect of a war with Japan justified continued sacrifices on the part of the workers and peasants, made it possible for Stalin to initiate a policy of colonization in Siberia, and gave the people the impression of a military alliance with the United States, Japan's permanent prospective enemy.

It was a curious coincidence that on December 29, 1933, President Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, Viacheslav Molotoff and Maxim Litvinoff, variously and in different places, should have done strong talking about the next war. President Roosevelt said:

Ninety percent of the world's population are content with their present territorial limits and are willing to disarm if the others will. The fear that the other 10% may be swayed by that leadership which seeks territorial expansion is responsible for the threat to the peace of the world. If the 10% could be persuaded by the other 90% to renounce that leadership, permanent world peace would be possible.

Now, it is difficult to work all this out in percentages, but it was assumed at the time, and has not yet been denied, that President Roosevelt meant Japan and Germany when he spoke of countries dissatisfied with their present territorial limits, for both countries are seeking more territories, Japan in Manchuria, Germany in Austria. But Japan has completed her job

in Manchuria and has, in effect, annexed that country. Therefore, the Russians assumed, and with much logic, that President Roosevelt was criticizing Japan for a prospective rape of the Maritime Provinces of Siberia. And, the realistic Marxists reasoned, if the President of the United States feels so strongly about that, we had better show the United States how friendly we can be by constantly quarrelling with Japan. So Stalin said:

Japan is a real danger to the Soviet Union. We would like to have friendly relations with the Japanese, but unfortunately this does not depend on us alone. . . . There is a grave danger. We cannot but prepare to meet it.

And Molotoff said:

Both Germany and Japan have left the League. . . . The Soviet Union is in a dangerous position, surrounded as she is by capitalism, but those who try to attack us will only break their necks.

Litvinoff, somewhat more diplomatically, stated the case thus:

The Japanese military authorities are considering the seizure of the Maritime Provinces and Vladivostok. At a time when we are only taking defensive measures, Japan is feverishly preparing for war.

To all this the Japanese replied by concentrating on a large military budget, by consolidating the railroads of Manchuria, and by purchasing more and more munitions. The Japanese were convinced that President Roosevelt wanted a war with Japan and that Soviet Russia would be America's ally. They were getting their people ready for what politicians like to call "a defensive attack" on Soviet Russia in the spring, when the snow had melted in Siberia, when the weather was pleasant enough for a war, when an army could be moved.

In fact, so stirred up did everyone be-

come that Mussolini and Lloyd George, feature-writers for American Sunday papers, were laying out the next war with certainty, Mussolini being particularly annoyed with the Japanese for killing the market for Italian silk even in Italy. In the United States, the columnists permitted themselves one statement each on the inevitability of war, so that if war did come they would not be accused of falling down on a big story. Then in October and November, lecturers were telling American women that six weeks after the United States recognized Soviet Russia, not only would a war between Russia and Japan discolor the Siberian snows, but that the United States would be in it. The story went that the United States would extend to Russia huge credits for arms and munitions, which would be shipped from Seattle to Vladivostok. The Japanese would blow up the American boats carrying the munitions, and we would immediately blow up Japan. It was a wonderful story which gave many Middle Western audiences the creeps.

Thus far nothing really bellicose has happened. In fact, Japan has been making overtures to Soviet Russia for a settlement of outstanding issues between the two countries.

III

Japan and Soviet Russia are really finding it difficult to discover a cause for a war. The great "experts" in the United States assume that the quarrel is over Japan's aggressions in Manchuria, but Soviet Russia has condoned that by recognizing the right of Manchukuo to succeed to China's treaty rights and obligations *vis-à-vis* Russia in Manchuria. Furthermore, Soviet Russia actually offered to sell the Chinese Eastern Railway to Japan,

and Japanese and Manchukuan officials negotiated with Russia over it. On May 11, 1933, Litvinoff handed the press in Moscow a written statement explaining why Russia wanted to sell the line to Manchukuo, that is, Japan, and in the course of the statement he virtually recognized the *de facto* situation in Manchuria.

It was no idealistic impetus which moved Soviet Russia to act in this manner. Rather was it the cold fact that Soviet Russia no longer could hold the Chinese Eastern Railway, that Japan actually had the road through Manchukuo, that the Japanese were building new railroads which would, when completed, wipe out the economic and strategic value of the Russian line—and that, therefore, the Russians preferred to get out of the picture at a reasonable price.

The Chinese Eastern Railway has had a long history of fraud, intrigue, Oriental politics and warfare. Originally conceived by M. Witte, Russia's most brilliant minister of finance, as an instrument for the annexation of Manchuria, Mongolia and part of North China by Russia, it was the direct product of the Li-Lobanoff Treaty, a secret agreement between Russia and China providing an offensive and defensive alliance against Japan. Signed in 1896, this treaty was a product of the Sino-Japanese War which was really Japan's first test of strength with Russia.

The railroad was to have been financed by the Russo-Chinese Bank, established for the purpose, in which the Chinese government and the Russian treasury were partners. Actually all the money was put up by French purchasers of Russian bonds, so that in addition to the Russian, Chinese and Manchukuan interests in the line, there is a valid French interest which, however, has been repudiated by Soviet Russia as imperialistic.

After the northern section of the line was completed, the Russians engineered a political situation in South Manchuria by which China was forced to agree to the extension of the line to the very tip of South Manchuria, thus bringing Russia down to the warm water ports of Dairen and Port Arthur. Russia's imperialistic efforts to annex Manchuria by means of this railroad was the primary motive for John Hay's "Open Door" pronouncement, which was inspired by Great Britain; for the Anglo-Japanese Alliance; and for the Russo-Japanese War, in the course of which Theodore Roosevelt strengthened Japan's position politically and financially.

As a result of the Russo-Japanese War, Japan, at Portsmouth in New Hampshire, got from Russia, by treaty, the southern part of the railroad, thenceforth known as the South Manchuria Railway, the cities of Dairen and Port Arthur, and the principal coal and iron mines in China.

Then Russia and Japan joined in a friendly partition of Manchuria and Mongolia. In a series of secret treaties negotiated between 1907 and 1916, Russia declared that North Manchuria and Mongolia west of the Peking meridian was her sphere of influence; Japan elected South Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia. China was not consulted.

When Russia went Bolshevik these treaties were thrown over as imperialistic and were published to show the world how wicked Czarist Russia and Japan could be. So in 1918, the Great Powers, including the United States, went into North Manchuria and Siberia, ostensibly to rescue Czechs lost in Siberia, but really to see whether they could not destroy Bolshevism. During this expedition, the United States really managed the Chinese Eastern Railway through Col. John F. Stevens and a corps of American engineers.

The Allied expedition only too soon became farcical, for instead of devoting itself to rescuing Czechs and fighting Bolsheviks, it became a mad-house of international intrigue, each Ally trying to put one over on the other. For instance, each was to send 7,000 men to Siberia, but the Japanese sent 70,000, and the other Allies, particularly the Americans, believed that the Japanese were seeking to steal the Maritime Provinces from Russia which they all agreed must not occur. Between 1918-1922, there was as much talk of a war between the United States and Japan as there is today, but all this was liquidated by the Washington Conference. Japan got out of Siberia, and in 1924 China and Russia and Japan and Russia signed treaties regularizing their relations.

The Chinese Eastern Railway again came under Russo-Chinese partnership. This time it was Soviet Russia and the Manchurian government (at that moment autonomous) which were in partnership. The French interest was disregarded. This agreement functioned more or less badly until 1929, when Chang Hsueh-liang, who had succeeded his father as overlord of Manchuria, attempted to throw the Russians out of the line by armed force. This proved to be an error of judgment, for the Russians sent an army against the Chinese and defeated them before the war correspondents from all corners of the earth could reach Harbin. During this engagement, the Japanese strictly minded their own business, and in the Far East it was generally assumed that the Russians and the Japanese had made another tricky deal.

When China and Japan got into a war in 1931 over Manchuria, Russia minded her business so strictly that even when the Lytton Commission appealed for Russian assistance, it was not forthcoming.

The Russians were clearly out of it. Then, when the smoke of the fracas had blown away, Russia offered to sell the line to Manchukuo and negotiations were started with Japan.

The Russians originally asked for 250,000,000 gold roubles and the Japanese offered 50,000,000 yen. The Russians then reduced their price to 200,000,000, which was then equivalent to \$103,000,000, but Japan stuck to her fifty millions or about \$13,500,000. The two countries then went into a conference on the relative value of the gold rouble and the paper yen, and not being able to reach any agreement, got deadlocked and quit.

Then Russia accused Japan of planning to steal the line (which, for that matter, had already been done) and produced some documents said to have been penned by General Hishikari, commander of the Japanese troops in Siberia, to prove it. The Japanese insisted that the documents were forged. So both countries moved soldiers, munitions, and airplanes to the frontiers, and settled down to wait for a war.

IV

Now, it is obvious that between Russia's first offer in May, 1933, to sell the line and the present deadlock and war threat, something happened to change Stalin's mind. It was not the sales price, because clearly Russia asked too much and Japan offered too little in the hope that the difference might be split. The impediment was recognition of Soviet Russia by the United States and the prospect of an American-Japanese war, which the Russians believe to be inevitable from the standpoint of Marxian economic determinism.

They assume that Japan and the United

States, as capitalistic countries, must go to war to destroy each other in order to gain the potential markets in China. That being so, there is no use being at peace with Japan if there is more to gain out of an American-Japanese war. If that war does not take place, then the Russians can always come to terms with the Japanese, because the Russians know that the Japanese do not want Russian airplanes flying over Tokyo, which is only five hours from Vladivostok, the Russian base. On the other hand, if the Japanese lose their heads and start a war, the Russians argue, then the United States will intervene, because the whole white race will be appalled by the yellow peril.

The Japanese, on the other hand, up to February of the present year, exhibited all the unbalance of an inferiority complex run riot. Every Japanese admiral and general felt called upon to make a Nazi-like speech to prove that he wasn't scared of anyone. The Japanese were going to have the largest army and largest navy and would fight the world. But what about coal, iron and rice? No speeches were made about them, because the balance sheet was in the red on these commodities, and the sober men of Japan knew it. They also knew that fighting in Siberia is possible only from about April to October, and that even if Japan were wholly victorious all the time, the Japanese army would not reach Lake Baikal during the first year of fighting and would have to subject itself to a frightful winter in Siberia waiting for the next Spring. The Japanese tried that once and lost more men from frost than by bullets. They would not like to try it again if they can help it.

Furthermore, if there is any fighting, it will inevitably be in the air. Russia would clearly have the advantage. Vla-

divostok is only a few hours from Tokyo, Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto. But Japan could take possession of the Maritime Provinces of Siberia, and still be twenty-four hours' flying distance from the nearest important Russian city. Geography thus makes this a useless war from the Japanese standpoint, and for the Russians also, for they would gain nothing if they succeeded in destroying Japanese cities. In short, neither Russia nor Japan has anything to gain out of a war.

As is so often the case in a quarrel among Orientals—and the Russians are, in politics at any rate, Asiatics—the immediate issue is often not only trivial but is a pawn which may easily be wiped off the board. In this instance, Manchukuo, a few months ago, arrested six Russian officials of the Chinese Eastern Railway, and the Russians cannot even talk business while their people are in jail. So, at this moment of writing, the principal subject for negotiation is the release of the arrested Russians. When and if that is done, it will be possible to resume the conference for the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway to Manchukuo, and apparently the Japanese are about ready to release them.¹

V

War scares are worked up by varied interests, but principally by military men in quest of large appropriations for munitions. The Japanese military man in 1931 got his appropriations by what he described to his own people as a defensive war against China. He was assisted in his quest for funds by the American Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, and the League of Nations. He was able to make

¹ As this article goes to press, a message from Tokyo says that the Russians have been released and that negotiations for the sale of the railroad are about to commence.

speeches to his own people telling them that the United States maintained a fleet in the Pacific to destroy Japan. At one stage, he even circulated a rumor that the United States was building a tunnel under the Bering Sea through which an army would be marched from Alaska. When the United States and the League of Nations no longer furnished the Japanese military man with campaign material, he turned to Russia. There, in the *Izvestia*, he could always find a paragraph or two to help him, but it really did not stir the imagination of the Japanese masses because that war did not look real.

Then General Araki developed a philosophy of a crisis in 1936. That, he said, would be the year when Japan would either be destroyed by the United States or would rise to full equality with the white countries. In that year Japan would demand naval parity with the United States and Great Britain or there would be a war.

General Araki associated his war propaganda with mystical doctrines of racial superiority and racial destinies which stirred the imaginations of the more susceptible Japanese youth. But somehow

things didn't work out right. So General Araki conveniently went to bed with pneumonia and lost his job as minister of war. The political and economic situation in Japan required a less formidable orator, a quieter mind—a leader to whom 1936 is just a year, not a crisis.

For while the Japanese would prefer to sign a naval agreement recognizing parity as a principle, this, they feel, is not an issue for a war between the United States and Japan, and as there is no other issue between the two countries, it seems to be wisdom to pipe down, to avoid incendiary speeches and magazine articles, and to cultivate a policy of prolonged and unpublicized negotiations between Tokyo and Washington. Upon such an unwarlike policy Japan has now embarked.

It will take the Russian, Japanese, and American peoples some time to realize that Japan has liquidated the war scare. Perhaps it is too late altogether to get over the effects of it. Perhaps too much national antagonism has already been generated. But even if countries do not like each other, they will find it difficult to make a war if there is nothing to fight about and nobody wants to fight.

ASPIRIN IS A MEMBER OF THE N.R.A.

BY WILLIAM SAROYAN

REMEMBER above all things the blood, remember that man is flesh, that flesh suffers pain, and that the mind being caught in flesh suffers with it. Remember that the spirit is a form of the flesh, and the soul its shadow. Above all things humor and intelligence, and truth as the only beginning: not what is said or done, not obviousness: the truth of silences, the intelligence of nothing said, nothing done. The piety. Faces. Memory, our memory of the earth, this one and the other, the one which is now this and the one that was once another, what we saw, and the sun. It is our life and we have no other. Remember God, the multitudinous God.

Remember laughter.

There were nights, in New York, when my hair would freeze on my head, and I would awaken from sleeplessness and remember. I would remember stalking through print, the quiet oratory of some forgotten name, a quiet man who put something down on paper: yea and yea and yea. Something wordless but precise, my hair frozen, and the small attic room in the heart of Manhattan, across the street from the Paramount Building, and myself in the room, in the darkness, alone, waiting for morning. I used to leave my bed sometimes and smoke a cigarette in the darkness. The light I disliked, so I used to sit in the darkness, remembering.

One or two faces I saw coming across the Continent: the boy with a bad dose,

riding in the bus, going home to his mother, taking a bad dose with him from a South American resort, talking about the girl, just a young kid and very beautiful, and God, what a pain, every moment and nothing to do about it. He was eighteen or nineteen, and he had gone down to South America to sleep with a girl, and now he had got it, where it hurt most, and he was drinking whisky and swallowing aspirin, to keep him going, to deaden the pain. York, Pennsylvania, a good town, and his people living there. Everything, he said, everything will be all right the minute I get home. And the sick girl, going back to Chicago, talking in her sleep. The language of fear, the articulation of death, no grammar, exclamations, one after another, the midnight grief, children emerging from the grown girl, talking.

And the faces of people in the streets, in the large cities and in the small towns, the sameness.

II

I used to get up in the middle of the night and remember. It was no use trying to sleep, because I was in a place that did not know me, and whenever I tried to sleep the room would declare its strangeness and I would sit up in bed and look into the darkness.

Sometimes the room would hear me laughing softly. I could never cry, be-

cause I was doing what I wished to do, so I couldn't help laughing once in a while, and I would always feel the room listening. Strange fellow, this fellow, I would hear the room say; in this agony, he gets up, with his hair frozen, in the middle of the night, and he laughs.

There was enough pain everywhere, in everyone who lived. If you tried to live a godly life, it didn't make any difference, and in the end you came up with a dull pain in your body and a soul burning with a low malicious fire, eating its substance slowly. I used to think about the pain and in the end all I could do was laugh. If there had been a war, it would have been much easier, more reasonable. The pain would have been explicable. We are fighting for high ideals, we are protecting our homes, we are protecting civilization, and all that. A tangible enemy, a reasonable opposition, and swift pain, so that you couldn't have time enough to think about it much: either it got you all the way, carrying you over into death and calm, or it didn't get you. Also, something tangible to hate, a precise enemy. But without a war it was different. You might try hating God, but in the end you couldn't do it. In the end you laughed softly or you prayed, using pious and blasphemous language.

I used to sit in the dark room, waiting for morning and the fellowship of passengers of the subway. The room had great strength. It belonged. It was part of the place. Fellows like me could come and go, they could die and be born again, but the room was steady and static, always there. I used to feel its indifference toward me, but I could never feel unfriendly toward it. It was part of the scheme, a small attic room in the heart of Manhattan, without an outside window, four dollars a week: me or the next fellow, any

of us, it didn't matter. But whenever I laughed, the room would be puzzled, a bit annoyed. It would wonder what there was for me to laugh about, my hair frozen, and my spirit unable to rest.

Sometimes, during the day, I used to look into the small mirror and see the room in my face, trying to understand me. I would be laughing, looking at the room in the mirror, and it would be annoyed, wondering how I could laugh, what I saw in my life that was amusing.

It was the secrecy that amused me, the fact of my being one of the six million people in the city, living there, waiting to die. I could die in this room, I used to say to myself, and no one would ever understand what had happened, no one would ever say, Do you know that boy from California, the fellow who is studying the subway? Well, he died in a little room on Forty-fourth Street the other night, alone. They found him in the little room, dead. No one would be able to say anything about me if I died, no one knew I was from California and that I was studying the subway, making notes about the people riding in the subway. My presence in Manhattan was not known, so if I came to vanish, my vanishing would not be known. It was a secret, and it amused me. I used to get up in the middle of the night and laugh about it quietly, disturbing the room.

I used to make the room very angry, laughing, and one night it said to me, You are in a hurry but I am not: I shall witness your disintegration, but when you are destroyed I shall be standing here quietly. You will see.

It made me laugh. I knew it was the truth, but it was amusing to me. I couldn't help laughing at the room wanting to see me go down.

But there was an armistice: what hap-

pened was this: I moved away. I rented another room. It was a war without a victor. I packed my things and moved to the Mills Hotel.

But it isn't so easy to escape a war. A war has a way of following a man around, and my room in the Mills Hotel was even more malicious than the other. It was smaller and therefore its eloquence was considerably louder. Its walls used to fall in upon me, white with the whiteness of madness, but I went on laughing. In the middle of the night I used to hear my neighbors, old and young men. I used to hear them speaking out against life from their sleep. I used to hear much weeping. That year many men were weeping from their sleep. I used to laugh about this. It was such a startling thing that I used to laugh. The worst that can happen to any of us, I used to laugh, is death. It is a small thing. Why are you men weeping?

It was because of remembrance, I suppose. Death is always in a man, but sometimes life is in him so strongly that it makes a sad remembrance and comes out in the form of weeping through sleep.

And it was because of the pain. Everybody was in pain. I was studying the subway and I could see the pain in the faces of everybody. I looked everywhere for one face that was not the mask of a pained life, but I did not find such a face. It was this that made my study of the subway so fascinating. After months of study I reached a decision about all of us in Manhattan. It was this: the subway is death, all of us are riding to death. No catastrophe, no horrible accident: the slow death, emerging from life. It was such a terrific fact that I had to laugh about it.

I lived in many rooms, in many sections of the city, East Side, West Side, downtown, uptown, Harlem, the Bronx, Brook-

lyn, all over the place. It was the same everywhere, my hair frozen at night, alien walls around me, and the smile of death in my eyes.

But I didn't mind. It was what I had wanted to do. I was a clerk in one of thousands of offices of a great national enterprise, doing my part to make America the most prosperous nation on earth, more millionaires per square inch than all the other nations put together, etc. I was paying cash for my sleeplessness, for the privilege of riding in the subway. I was eating in the Automats, renting vacant rooms all over the place, buying clothes, newspapers, aspirin.

I do not intend to leave aspirin out of this document. It is too important to leave out. It is the hero of this story, all of us six million people in New York, swallowing it, day after day. All of us in pain, needing it. Aspirin is an evasion. But so is life. The way we live it. You take aspirin in order to keep going. It deadens pain. It helps you to sleep. It keeps you aboard the subway. It is a substitute for the sun, for strong blood. It stifles remembrance, silences weeping.

It does not harm the heart. That is what the manufacturers say. They say it is absolutely harmless. Maybe it is. Death does not harm the heart either. Death is just as harmless as aspirin. I expect casket manufacturers to make this announcement in the near future. I expect to see a full page advertisement in the *Saturday Evening Post*, making a slogan on behalf of death. Do not be deceived . . . die and see your dreams come true . . . death does not harm the heart . . . it is absolutely harmless . . . doctors everywhere recommend it . . . and so on.

You hear a lot of sad talk about all the young men who died in the Great War. Well, what about this war? Is it

less real because it destroys with less violence, with a ghastlier shock, with a more sustained pain?

The coming of snow in Manhattan is lovely. All the ugliness is softened by the pious whiteness. But with the snow comes the deadly cold. With the snow death comes a little closer to everyone. If you are pretty rich, it doesn't bother you much: you don't have to get up in the morning in a cold room and rush out to an Automat for a cup of coffee and then dive into the subway. If you are rich, the snow is only beautiful to you. You get up when you please, and there is nothing to do but sit in warm rooms and talk with other rich people. But if you aren't rich, if you are working to make America a nation of prosperous millionaires, then the snow is both beautiful and ghastly. And when the cold of the snow gets into your bones you are apt to forget that it is beautiful; you are apt to notice only that it is ghastly.

III

A few evenings ago I was listening to the radio, out here in San Francisco. Aspirin days are over for me. I depend on the sun these days. I was listening to a very good program, sponsored by one of America's most prosperous manufacturers of aspirin. You know the name. I do not intend to advertise the company. It does enough advertising of its own. The radio announcer said the cold and sore throat season had come, and of course it had. I could see snow falling over Manhattan, increasing the sales of aspirin all over the city. Then the announcer said, Aspirin is a member of the N.R.A.

It made me laugh to hear that. But it is the truth. Aspirin *is* a member of the N.R.A. It *is* helping everyone to evade

fundamentals, it *is* helping to keep people going to work. Aspirin *is* helping to bring back prosperity. It *is* doing its part. It *is* sending millions of half-dead people to their jobs. It *is* doing a great deal to keep the spirit of this nation from disintegrating. It *is* deadening pain everywhere. It *isn't* preventing anything, but it is deadening pain.

What about the N.R.A.? Well, I leave that to you. Maybe the N.R.A. is a member of aspirin. Anyhow, together they make a pretty slick team. They are deadening a lot of pain, but they aren't preventing any pain. Everything is the same everywhere.

All I know is this: that if you keep on taking aspirin long enough it will cease to deaden pain.

And that is when the fun begins. That is when you begin to notice that snow isn't beautiful at all. That is when your hair begins to freeze and you begin to get up in the middle of the night, laughing quietly, waiting for the worst, remembering all the pain and not wanting to evade it any longer, not wanting any longer to be half-dead, wanting full death or full life. That is when you begin to be mad about the way things are going in this country, the way things are with life, with man. That is when, weak as you are, something old and savage and defiant in you comes up bitterly out of your illness and starts to smash things, making a path for you to the sun, destroying cities, wrecking subways, pushing you into the sun, getting you away from evasions, dragging you by your neck to life.

It made me laugh, the way I used to laugh in New York, when I heard that radio announcer say that aspirin was a member of the N.R.A., and it made me remember. It made me want to say what I knew about aspirin.

ONE NIGHT AT CONEY

BY ROBERT M. COATES

HE SAID: it was one night at Coney Island last summer, and it was one of those things that leave you wondering. There are times, you know, when events around you take on a strange force and direction, as if they had been aimed at you, and at you alone. You are wandering with the crowd and in the crowd; suddenly you observe a gesture, you overhear a meaningful phrase: some little drama has its course before your eyes, and it seems that you, and in the whole crowd no one but you, have been singled out to witness it.

Even more, there seems to be a duty involved, an obligation laid on you. The actors are all strangers and all oblivious to you, yet you understand their problems and their emotions as intimately as might a participant, and the whole action revolves around you as if you were its center. As if some rôle had been left open for you—the rôle, perhaps, that would decide the issue—if you would but assume it.

But before you can determine what that rôle may be, the episode is over, the incident is ended, the actors scattered again in the crowd. You are left wondering.

I was down there alone, that evening. It was hot, I remember, but there was a kind of seaside freshness in the air, and the noise and the lights and the music—even the fat rank smells that filtered over everything—gave an effect of happy-go-

lucky companionableness to the crowds. People bunched in front of sideshows, turning friendly faces up towards the exhorting barkers; then—dislodged one by one by the massed pressures behind them—let themselves be carried on again, unprotesting and unresisting, towards whatever might lie beyond. There was no hurrying, no purposeful striding this way or that, but only an easy-flowing merging of all impulses into one. I went drifting down the Bowery to its end at Steeplechase Park, and was about to turn back again when I saw a small group of people standing on the sidewalk across the street. Two boys were dancing for pennies, to the tune of the Steeplechase band inside the park; it was they whom the crowd was watching.

They were doing the Lindy Hop, if you know the dance: the main thing about it is that at every second measure the two dancers separate, though still keeping step, dance four beats apart and then come together, then separate again, and so on. It's a dance of strict timing, and this, and the mutual retreating and advancing, give it an oddly formal character, in spite of its jazz beat and its rapid movement.

The two boys were dancing as if they had always danced together. One, and the older—he may have been sixteen or eighteen—was a mulatto; he wore a sweatshirt and dirty white canvas pants, but he moved with a grace and ease that had a foreign and slightly unpleasant flavor. He danced

like a Latin bravo, with a kind of sinister condescension; he danced too well, and his partner—a white boy, he was, and younger—followed like a girl, with a girl's un-hindering docility.

There was something vaguely disquieting about it all. There's no harm, surely, life being what it is, in two lads dancing to the tune of a brass band while a crowd watches; but if the dance becomes an end in itself—if the one shows too bold a dominance and the other a too practiced subservience—you begin thinking of the sexual margins that surround their actions, and the terrible ruthlessness of vice, that fastens itself most securely on the young.

II

I watched for a moment, and then my attention was attracted—by I don't know what: by a sort of aura of excitement that surrounded him, I imagine—to a man standing beside me. He was a tallish fellow, thin-bodied, but with an abnormally round soft face and a wide mouth, and he had on a raincoat cut like a trench coat, deliberately shabby and disreputable-looking, and a soft felt hat very floppy in the brim, with the crown tucked in all around, the way boys at college used to do a dozen or so years ago. Only his was tucked in too deeply, which gave it a kind of comic pancake look, above that soft broad face of his.

I knew what he was, of course; there's a softness about the eyes and a certain sugariness about the mouth that gives them all away. Just now he was in a sort of quiet frenzy, all by himself, as he watched the dancing boys. Here in the rough-and-tumble of Coney he had stumbled on a spectacle that suited his own peculiar passions, and there was something horrible about the relishing way he welcomed it.

His delight was past concealment; it greased his face and glistened in his eyes, it set his lips twitching and his whole body rocking convulsively. He couldn't stand still: he wanted to be right in among them, and all the while he was glancing slyly about, as if he half hoped that the orgy would become general. Suddenly, as if he could no longer contain himself, he turned and spoke to a young fellow on the other side of him.

This was a young Italian of a type Coney Island is full of—hatless, slick-haired and sharp-featured, white-sweatered and brown as mahogany—and he started and his eyes took a covert slant when he saw who it was that he had to do with. I couldn't hear what was said, but the Italian nodded and answered, and then listened, and then I saw a fixed smooth grin come over his face and saw his hand behind his back making beckoning gestures to two other lads, twins of his as to clothes and slickness, who began moving slowly towards him.

And then in a pause in the music I heard the tall man speaking. He was saying—and his voice wasn't high, but it had that fluty note that you'd know the whole world over: "Let's do things together," he was saying. "Let's wander down to Feldman's, maybe, and sip a beer."

I knew what was going to happen before he did. He was still standing there his face all cajolery and eagerness, but saw the other's grin thin a little; and I remember how, as I watched them, suddenly everything else—the heat, and the distant tumbling of the surf, the clatter of roller coasters, the brassy persistence of the band—all became separate items, distinct and unconnected, against this central silence.

Then they all fused. Without a word of warning, with the same hard smile still

flattening his mouth—"Sure, I'll do things with you!" the Italian had said, and chopped a vicious short right, flush to the fairy's face.

It missed the jaw, landing high on his cheek; it staggered him; he didn't go down, but in the moment of impact it was almost as if the blow had shaken his eyes loose from his head: they went instantly round, fixed, popping with terror. Then—with the panic alacrity of a rabbit, of any animal to whom flight is the one protection—he ran. I remember the curious effect his fright and his flight had on me, how almost sickeningly they revealed the terrible aloneness of the man: nowhere, not even in the thickest crowd, could he find a comrade, nowhere could he make a stand.

III

That is all you usually see, as you pass in a crowd. You hear a phrase, you observe a gesture, and then—before the phrase can be completed or the final significance of the gesture be made clear—you are swept on again, as the crowd carries you. The outcome remains a mystery.

So I watched that flat hat of his going bobbing through the crowds on the Bowery, and the three white sweaters dodging after it—watched, without moving to follow them, until at last I lost sight of them all. I loitered a few minutes more, till the music stopped and the boys stopped dancing and my own little crowd dispersed. Then, slowly, I started back up the Bowery again, having nowhere much else to go. I'd gone only a block or two before I saw him again.

I had come to one of those sideshows in which motorcycle riders perform in a circular track. It was a high, ungainly structure, all braces and beams outside to stay

the bowl-shaped track, with a kind of rim around the upper edge where the spectators stood. A show was going on at the time: you could hear the rattle of the exhausts, and the recurrent rumble and creak of the tires on the wooden planking as the machines spun around. Then the motor-sound slackened to an uneven popping, and I heard a voice shouting something unintelligible inside. The show was over, and the spectators began edging their way around the platform and down the stairs to the street.

One figure remained still standing there. It was the fairy. There was a huge arc light mounted on a pole in the center of the track and almost level with its top, and the light from it poured up out of the bowl like the glare from the crater of a volcano. Against it, his figure stood out with a sharpness of silhouette that was somehow symbolical: up there, in that brilliant isolation, his little flat hat and the drooping lines of his raincoat, his gangling uncertain legs, seemed to distinguish and define him, like a uniform. They seemed the very outline of all his kind.

By now, the riders had wheeled their machines out on the platform in front and were racing their motors to attract a crowd; the barker was beginning his chant. He still stood there, leaning as if absorbed on the inner railing, and staring down at the empty track. I couldn't help but feel sorry for him, marooned as he was up there. Whatever the impulse that had driven him up there for refuge, it had been a bad one: in the whole of the island he could hardly have found a more conspicuous position than the one he was left in now.

Down in a little alley at one side of the track the three boys were waiting for him. They watched him for a minute, then one of them scuffed a stone loose in the

ground, picked it up and threw it. It didn't hit him, but it struck the planking and went bouncing along the platform; at the sound the barker, the ticket sellers, everyone out front looked up inquiringly. Then one of them ran quickly up the stairs. They were too far away for me to hear what was said, of course; I only saw the carnival man, burly and competent, advancing on the fairy, and the fairy making gestures of protest and remonstrance. He even put his hand to his pocket, as if to pay for another performance, but the carnival man—he knew there was something in the wind, I suppose—would have none of that. So, slowly, with the other following implacably behind him and the crowd below watching curiously, the fairy made his way back around the rim of the track and began his descent to the street. The three boys moved forward to meet him.

And there, of course, clearly and unmistakably, was the moment for me to intervene. There was the pause that I recognized, when—the stage in readiness, the action halted, the actors as yet irresolute and undecided—everything seemed to wait for me to assume my rôle in the drama. But what was the rôle, and why should it devolve on me? Here was a man whom I did not know and for whom I had no sympathy whatever, being driven ignobly from hiding to face his pursuers; here were his pursuers, as vicious in their unrelenting cruelty perhaps as he, waiting to fall upon him: and all strangers and all oblivious to me, and yet I stood watching them, knowing their several aims and their meanings, knowing that I alone, among all the crowd that witnessed the incident, had seen its beginnings and could judge its causes—knowing that I, by the weight of my presence now, if I would, might decide

the issue between them. But why had I been the one selected? What was expected of me? What was I to do?

What I did, of course, was to go my way—leaving him to twist and turn as he might, and they to follow him, towards whatever dark alley they might corner him in at last. I knew what would happen to him there.

Or even, in this case, in no darkness, but in the crowded street itself. His fault was such that they, and they alone, would have righteousness on their side. There is a convention in such matters; even the cop on the beat will usually acquiesce in the right of every man to beat up the fairy who accosts him. They might come upon him anywhere, in the midst of the crowd or under a lonely street lamp: no one would bother them, no one would interfere. There would be no one now that he could turn to for aid.

IV

Half an hour afterward I was up in the subway terminal, waiting for a train to take me home, and there I saw him again. He was sitting on a bench, down towards the end of the platform, and I almost stumbled over him before I noticed him, for he was sitting huddled pretty much in a heap, in the darkest corner he could find. When the train came in and he got aboard it, I could understand why.

They had worked on him, there was no doubt of that. One sleeve of his raincoat was ripped half off at the shoulder, and the belt, torn loose from its buckle, was dangling down his back. He had been down in the mud too, apparently, for one trouser leg was streaked with dirt, and his hands were grimy with it. His face was a mess: there was dried blood from his nose caking his upper lip, and one side of his

mouth, and the fleshy part of his jaw, had that pulped puffed look that you get not from one blow but from a hammering succession of them. One of his eyes looked pretty bad.

Oddly enough, though, he still had his little flat hat, and it sat on his battered face as incongruously as ever.

He sat in the forwardmost corner of the car, very much to himself. People came aboard, one by one, while the train waited in the station; each one glanced at him with that quick noncommittal stare of the New Yorker, then looked strictly away again. He paid little attention. Once he looked up, and for an instant his eye met mine; then it moved on, roving over the other passengers. He hadn't recognized me. His gaze held no reproach, no blame.

Then, with a curious kind of weariness, like an old man making himself comfortable one step at a time, he propped his elbows on his knees, leaned slowly forward, and brought his head down to rest on his hands. He rode that way almost all the way into town.

And all the way I had been sitting and watching him, and wondering; and then

suddenly I remembered. It had been long ago, when I was a freshman at college, and it happened at Savin Rock, a summer resort near New Haven. It was an evening in spring and I had been down there, and then I was sitting at the end of the seat in an open trolley car, waiting for it to start. And then, and just as the trolley started, I saw a man running toward me, a man pursued by a crowd of yelling boys. His hat was gone and his coat was flying, he was panting and sobbing—and I remembered the curious consternation that overcame me when I saw that the man, this full-grown man, was actually crying, that his face was streaming with tears.

I was younger then, and full of innocence, and I had not the slightest idea what the man had done or why the others pursued him. But he ran alongside the car, scrambling and clutching for a foothold as it gathered speed, and now I remembered that on a sudden impulse I had put down my hand and seized him, and hauled him safely onto the running board and into the car.

Now I remembered that I had given that other one my hand.

AGONY IN THE C.W.A.

BY RUTH L. PORTERFIELD

I AM a college graduate with seven years' experience as a research worker and editor. Two years ago the magazine on which I was working failed, and after that I was not able to get another job. My one dependent and I lived a hand-to-mouth existence on my limited savings and inadequate subsidies bestowed by friends and relatives as long as they had anything to bestow.

By November of last year, however, my fortunes had sunk to an all-time low level, and all possibilities of relief seemed to have been canvassed and exhausted. It was just then that press announcements of C.W.A. work in New York—apparently to be had for the asking—came to my grateful attention. In their timeliness these announcements seemed almost like the promise of bread from heaven.

When registration week arrived, I tried, in common with thousands of others, to get into the C.W.A. headquarters on Twenty-eighth Street, New York City. After I had attempted for several days to register, and each time had waited endless hours in the midst of a mob of day laborers, I began to realize the virtual impossibility of even getting inside the building. Finally, an acquaintance advised my going to the State Building to see if I could not find some less tortuous and more certain method of registering.

At the State Building I was given a letter to the Emergency Work Bureau on Fourth Avenue which, in the rush, was

lending its facilities for registering "specially needy cases." The process of registering with the E.W.B. was handled as sympathetically and thoughtfully as possible. I was assured that I would be placed in a few days and was instructed to stay at home until further notice so that I could be "investigated."

Four days later I received a letter saying that there would be no investigation. There followed a longer wait of several weeks. Finally, thinking that there must have been some mistake and that I had been overlooked, I went again to the E.W.B. to inquire into the reason for their sustained silence. They were most apologetic, saying that they had registered over twelve hundred "needy" cases but had been able to place none of them. They were genuinely concerned by the plight of all their registrants and were almost desperately anxious to do something about it, but their hands were evidently tied by some kind of hitch in the C.W.A. program.

Early in December I registered at C.W.A. branch office that had its headquarters at a settlement house in the neighborhood. In the meantime, I had explained my situation to a friend who was the head of a certain C.W.A. research project, and he as a result was making constant requests to have me assigned to his project. As a matter of fact, he was badly in need of additional help. However, he was told that there would be "no new white-coll

people until after December 1." When that date arrived, he was told, "No new white-collar people until after December 15."

On December 19 I received a notice from the director of the project in question, was interviewed by him, accepted, and sent to the main office of the C.W.A. on Twenty-eighth Street for certification. There I was told that no orders had been received by the "commissioner" and that I had better go back to the head of the project. The head of the project said that he was very sorry but that, after all, there had been a little difficulty which would not be adjusted until after January 1.

II

During these weeks of alternate encouragement and discouragement, I had been relaying the more hopeful C.W.A. developments to my landlord. He was very sympathetic and promised to wait for the rent. Meantime, however, the electric lights had been turned off, and there was the more serious difficulty of trying to get food without money. A day or two before Christmas, which gave promise of being a doleful holiday, I revisited the settlement house, explained the exigencies of the situation, and begged for work of some sort, even if it were only going out by the day. The head of the settlement house gave me five dollars and advised me to register for home relief.

The result of this new registration was a visit from an investigator, who came about ten days later. She filled out innumerable forms and said that we should be living in the Bronx and that we should, on no account, leave the house, as we must be there when she came with food tickets. One week later she brought a food ticket which, at specified stores, was

good for four dollars' worth of certain kinds of food. Two weeks later our lights were turned on, the home relief people having promised the Edison Company that they would pay our current bill and that we would pay our back bills as soon as I got work.

About the middle of January I received another notice from the head of the C.W.A. project in which I was interested. He gave me a letter to a State commissioner. I was interviewed by this functionary, accepted, and, to my unspeakably intense joy, sent to the C.W.A. office on Twenty-second Street to be put on the payroll. When I arrived there, I found myself in an enormous, barnlike room—evidently the whole lower floor of an office building—, empty except for a staff that was sitting idle. One of them bore a startling likeness to Grover Whalen. Immaculately dressed and boasting a gardenia and waxed mustache, he flitted around, obviously bored by having nothing to do.

The man who was supposed to certify me said that he was sorry but that the routine had been changed and he couldn't certify anyone. Possibly someone at the State Building could help. I went back to the commissioner, who also told me that he was very sorry but that he had just received a telegram saying that he could not certify any new people at that time. "Perhaps later," he added vaguely, "if anything turns up, I will let you know."

My despair has never been more complete than it was at that moment, and on January 19 there was wholesale desolation in circles similar to mine, as newspaper headlines announced that the C.W.A. and C.W.S. had just received cease-hiring orders from the Federal government. The pay of all workers at

present employed was to be slashed from 23 to 50%. Moreover, beginning February 15, all C.W.A. workers were to be dropped from the payroll at the rate of 500,000 a week.

A furore of protest, both organized and unorganized, greeted this announcement, but there did not seem much chance that anything would come of it. In fact, I had, in common with many others, almost put the C.W.A. out of my mind in favor of some more remunerative train of thought when the mail—on the morning of January 23—brought a printed notice from the E.W.B. to the effect that I should report at once, if interested in a job.

With more enthusiasm than wisdom I rushed, breakfastless, to the E.W.B. headquarters on Fourth Avenue. Although it was only a few moments after nine, the constantly increasing crowd had already begun to assume the proportions of a mob. With the thoughtfulness that seems to have characterized its actions throughout the E.W.B. admitted people to the building and even supplied chairs. Of course, there was a long wait, but at least we were not exposed to the cold. Everyone appeared enthusiastic and cheerful, and there was much conversation among strangers.

By noon I was admitted to the office. Once inside, we were shuttled about from desk to desk and asked to fill out more forms that solicited the usual variety of entertaining data. Did we have any insurance? Did our relatives have any insurance? Were we willing or unwilling workers?

When these formalities were concluded, I was given a white slip and told to report at the floor below. There I was interviewed, given a second slip, and told to appear at the C.W.A. office on Twenty-second Street at one o'clock. There was just time for a hurried sandwich at a cafe-

teria. I felt that the Twenty-second Street business would be a mere formality. At last something was happening! As soon as I dashed around the corner in the direction of the C.W.A. office, however, some of my elation disappeared, because I could see that I was doomed to an even more interminable wait than that of the morning had been.

It was almost impossible to get within sight of the building. The street was completely filled with job-hunters who, like myself, were armed with little slips. Much of the optimism that had prevailed in the morning seemed by this time to have vanished. Perhaps it was the increasing cold as well as fatigue that was responsible for the change. At any rate, the conversation was in an obviously subdued key, and the only topics that elicited common enthusiasm were tired feet and frozen fingers.

There were a surprising number of old women in line, and they endured the painful business of waiting with less complaining and more cheerfulness than most of their younger and huskier colleagues in misery. Several middle-aged women wore mink or similarly expensive furs, and there were one or two old men who displayed the inappropriate elegance of a Prince Albert. Many were neatly and even charmingly dressed but, on the whole, the crowd looked like just what it was—a group of professional people gone rather badly to seed.

III

The hours crawled by, and people had scarcely enough energy left to complain about the cold and their feet. They were no longer happily sure that they would be hired. Several policemen shared our wait. One of them went up and down the

line shouting, "You're all going to have jobs in the morning. Don't worry! You're all going to have jobs in the morning." Seeing that I was laughing, he stopped and said to me, "Give me laborers anytime; they'll do what you tell them to. But these white-collar workers!" He gazed around in some disgust for a moment and then added, "They are all going to have jobs in the morning. I keep telling them they're going to have jobs, but nobody believes me."

There was another prophet of joy in the shape of a worn little man who occasionally staggered out of the office and ran up and down the line saying, "Now all be patient! We'll take care of you if it takes until two in the morning. But you must be patient!" After he had gone, we would all look at each other and wonder how we could stand it until two in the morning.

In my own case, no such ordeal was required. The line moved almost imperceptibly, but by five o'clock I was inside the building. We marched four abreast into a sort of vestibule, where we were paired off into two's before walking down a railed-in enclosure that led to the center of the big room where I had been ten days before. In contrast to its almost completely barren state at that time, it was now jammed to the doors. The temperature was abnormally high and the smoke so thick that I fell into a kind of relaxed stupor.

The sartorially dashing member of the staff whom I had noticed on the occasion of my previous visit was very much in evidence, but the change in his appearance was alarming. His gardenia was gone, his collar off, and his mustache drooped dankly. Red in the face and perspiring, he stood on a soap box and shouted hoarsely over and over, "Don't write in pencil,

don't sign your name, and don't lean against the railing. I know you're tired. We're all tired, but if you lean against the railing it will break, and somebody will be killed. Don't lean against the railing, and don't write in pencil. . . ."

Eventually more forms were filled out. We were all given numbers, and then there was more waiting until the numbers were called. The confusion was overwhelming. No one knew where to go or what to do, and the staff was too disorganized by fatigue to be very helpful. The prevailing spirit was one of witless sympathy. Members of the staff told me that they had been on duty from eight in the morning the day before until ten at night—and some of them until midnight—taking people on.

For weeks the staff had reported every day for work and had had nothing to do. Not a white-collar worker was being hired. Then suddenly, after the alleged cease-hiring order came through, thousands must be put on the payroll, and the staff had to work overtime, hiring people in a perfect frenzy of fatigue. Why? Rumors ran through the crowd. The graft investigation had reached New York!

We drifted about, filling out slips, finding out that we had made mistakes, and then doing them over. The procedure, toward the final stages, presumably included an interview on the timely subject of past experience. The man who examined my card was gray with weariness. He looked at it for a moment and then at me. "What was your last job?" he asked. I told him the name of the magazine on which I had worked. He repeated it after me and said, "How about this magazine?" "What do you want to know about it?" I asked. Without answering, he said "next" and motioned to the person behind me that it was his turn to be questioned. Still

in a trance, he initialed my card and returned it to me.

Next I had to have my signature witnessed. There were two harassed women performing this rite. I asked the one who took care of me if she weren't tired affixing her signature. "I signed my name 983 times yesterday," she said. Every time she witnessed a signature she had to keep a record of it by making a stroke with her pen and a cross for every fifth name. When she had finished, she took my card and gave me my handful of forms. It looked like the end. I had been at every desk and every table and had filled out every conceivable kind of form, and there didn't seem to be any other place to go. Finally, I was told that I must take my forms and go upstairs.

Here the confusion was even more frenzied than it had been downstairs. Women were rushing around with their hair hanging down their backs, holding unlighted cigarettes in their mouths. Our forms were taken away. Here for the first time names were used. A girl rushed wildly around. She was trying to shout but unable to manage more than a hoarse whisper, in which she kept saying, "John Smith, John Smith!" Her voice was not audible outside a radius of a few feet. Self-appointed volunteers from the white-collar ranks took up the shout of "John Smith." They were glad to have something to do besides waiting. Finally, John Smith was accounted for, and the performance went on.

IV

At last I heard my name being called. I staggered forward and was asked to sit down for another interview. The man at the desk seemed ill and dazed. He looked at my forms and then at me. "This seems

to be a woman," he said to a confrère. "What shall I do? Shall I put her on a different list?" "No," said the other, obviously struggling to collect his faculties so that he could concentrate on the subject, "just write 'F' after her name."

I answered the usual questions, to which I had already responded so many times that day, and the sleepy man at the desk wrote "female" after my name. I was sent to two more desks, and entries of some sort were made at each. By that time I was almost completely beyond any emotion except that of fatigue, so I was astonishingly lacking in surprise and elation when I was finally told that I was to have a job as a "research worker" at New York University, at \$24 a week. The hours were to be from nine to four, with no work on Saturday. Then I was given a pink slip, saying to report for work the following morning at the university.

It was about six-thirty when I left. The excitement of the staff seemed to be increasing by the moment. Outside there were many still waiting in line, despite the bitter cold weather. By that time I was so tired that I literally could scarcely get home. Upon my arrival there, I found another notice from the E.W.B. in my mail box, urging me to report if I wanted a job. In the morning there was still another notice to the same effect. Others told me that they received as many as five notices, including a telegram or two.

In the morning I reported for work at the university, where I found a seeming duplication of the scene of the day before. There were crowds of people, all of whom had evidently been told to report there, waiting around for work. It must have seemed to the officials that they were involved in a riot rather than that they had been assigned the services of some trained research workers. Finally,

we were given numbers and asked to wait in an auditorium. All day and the next I waited. Toward evening of the second day my number was called, and I found that I was to assist one of the faculty in research for a book. The professor to whom I was assigned obviously had more help than he knew what to do with, although he did not complain. He merely seemed bewildered. In contrast, the project leader who had wanted me to work for him has not yet had anyone added to his meager staff.

A rumor had been going around that all our salaries were to be cut to \$18. Before January 19 the research workers had been receiving \$30 for a 38-hour week. Then their hours of work had been re-

duced to 30, and the pay had been cut to about \$24. Since we had been taken on at the reduced rate, we were skeptical as to the possibility of a future cut. However, the rumor persisted, and five days later, on pay day, the official announcement of a cut somewhat unnecessarily accompanied our reduced pay checks. There was no further reduction in the hours.

As I write, I hear that the C.W.A., including the "research projects," will be discontinued completely at the end of March. When that happens I will be out of a job again, as will about four million other people. How I'll manage then, I don't know, and at the moment I don't care: I feel too tired to worry.

FOR HORACE HALL

BY R. P. BLACKMUR

THIS man was yours, O Death, these fifteen years:
he who had been best dead when gassed, in battle,
was mortgaged out a kind of living chattel,
for a late funeral and rehearsed tears.

At one side of his grave there stood his wife
and the three girls he spawned of dead man's stuff;
three Legion buglers blew, for his cast slough,
a mid-day taps. There was no drum or fife.

Now, Sire, you have him, may your majesty
lecher again beneath his striped shroud;
let us who must remember him, now see
upon whose service we parade here, bowed.

That much we earned when his expiring breath
removed from us a fifteen-year-big death.

II

Wilson, the man was yours that April noon
you saw your people's clutching hand as mailed
and, to the bluster of a British tune,
the passionate peace of Jefferson was staled.
If Page and Colonel House were gulled by Grey,
you, poor Messiah, were worse gulled by them:
Content you on this loud inglorious day,
this dust the soil you spilt on Clio's hem.

The man was yours, is dead as you are dead;
like you, who in the text-books of the schools
gain glory daily, of him it shall be said,
likewise: Always, in death, the hero rules.

God grant we know, and never know again,
your lives found ignominy sovereign.

III

The sword comes first to mind but not to hand;
the argument was bloodier and the game
much slower than the sword can understand
unless the blade be twisted out of name.
And so it is the man is yours, O Lord,
twisted by rule until his blood-drenched lung
made mustard gas seem more the threatened sword
than Saladin's when the True Church was young.

But yours as well, O Lord, another way:
this scapegoat of a scapegoat might heap up
his after-knowledge on a pyre and pray:
his the last blood in the armed idol's cup;
the last, in nineteen hundred years' increase,
Prodigal of that Lord who brought, not peace.

IV

Let public feeling go, there Horace Hall
lies in his fortune and his country's flag.
Lift him, it is the weight of death will fall
and in the bottom of your belly sag.
Touch him and in your bowels the new cold
is not imagined but a manifest—
that you, oblivious, already fold
and nurture a cold passion for cold rest.

What hope is that you swallow, seeing death
put under earth and firmed with prim, saved sod?
What hope that saps you like a fear? What breath
is that which leaves you, leaving a full fraud?
I think that each man dying sows the wind
and we the dry seed-pod he leaves behind.

AMERICAN OPERA KEEPS STRUGGLING

BY W. J. HENDERSON

IT is not in the books, but it is whispered that when Alice visited opera land she fell in with a great tenor who promptly sang something at her. Thereupon she flatly declared, "It sounds like nonsense to me." The tenor replied, "It is nonsense, but it does not sound like nonsense when I sing it." This is the case of the now celebrated "Four Saints in Three Acts", book by Gertrude Stein, music by Virgil Thomson, lately revealed at the Forty-fourth Street Theatre in New York. There is a very profound fraternity which professes to understand the writings of Miss Stein, but no member of it has told us what "Four Saints" means. The book is something about St. Theresa and St. Ignatius, and there are even some Delphic sentences which hint that there was a chaste sentiment between them. "Saint Ignatius to be interested fortunately. Fortunately to be interested in St. Theresa."

Miss Stein's book has been published and copiously quoted. It is the familiar cryptic prose of this remote and unapproachable author. What is more important is the astonishing fact that when the opera is performed it sounds so much like "grand opera" that the oldest addict of "Aïda" and "Pagliacci" is thrown into a confusion of mind. The third act is musically all that a third act should be. Mr. Thomson has composed music which develops dramatically and reaches one of those resounding climaxes built to fill

morning newspapers with palpitating praise of singers, conductor and chorus. And what the singers are saying is, "Let Lucy Lily." Just as Händel used to write half a dozen pages on four words so does Mr. Thomson rear an imposing ensemble. One begins to wonder if there is actually any reason why an opera should be about anything.

One observant person who heard this work conveyed to me the opinion that its spell was to be found in the natural talent of Negroes for playing seriously like a lot of children. The Negroes in "Four Saints" surely did go about the performance as if they believed in it with all their hearts. They knelt and rolled their eyes toward stage heaven, genuflected, saint before saint, with the deepest gravity, and sang their nonsense syllables with as much faith and devotion as they might have sung, "It's me, Lord, standin' in need of prayer." And they all looked as proud as emperors and empresses in their royal robes the while they paraded solemnly in front of the cellophane scenery.

Are we supposed to emit philosophic reflections and make Aristotelian conclusions concerning this work? A simple question will point the way to at least one conclusion. We need not harass our souls with Kipling's, "Is it art?" Let us rather ask, "Can Americans go on making operas this way?" The obvious answer is, "No." You might just as well assert that the method of writing operas had been solved

for all time by "Pelléas et Melisande." Debussy himself confessed that he could never make another. His next score would have to be constructed on a different musical plan. The simple truth seems to be that "Four Saints in Three Acts" is merely a theatrical curiosity, ephemeral, amusing, moving to some, but as fleeting as the average Broadway invention. It is not even a museum piece, for there is no longer an Eden Musée and maybe it was meant to be a burlesque on "grand opera." If so, it is a gorgeous success.

A vast amount of effort has been expended on the meaning of "Four Saints." Is it imperative that an opera should have a meaning? Possibly not always, but waving that point aside, what meaning can be attributed to this unique invention? One of the writer's friends is of the opinion that the thing is an objectionable mimicry of religious processions, which have a deep and precious significance to the devout. The writer of this article is too dull of mind to perceive anything more subtle than a desire to burlesque grand opera. Surely Virgil Thomson's music declares this in numerous places.

It has also been suggested that Negroes are tolerated in travesties of sacred things while white actors in the same performances would arouse storms of opposition. There may be something in this. The white man has not yet thoroughly accustomed himself to regarding the Negro as a man and a brother, possessed of genuine human intelligence. The pale face views with amused forbearance the religious antics of the colored people, and, even while reacting emotionally to the eloquence of the spiritual, tells himself that it is the naïve utterance of the half civilized.

Why trouble ourselves with these problems? This music lover does not think "Four Saints" worth so much labor of the

soul. It is a good show, it has a certain emotional quality which cannot be described, and it transforms indefinable speech and action into something specious and plausible.

II

The industrious and enterprising gentlemen who direct the fortunes of the Juilliard School of Music made a possibly significant contribution to American opera when they produced "Helen Retires," book by John Erskine, music by George Antheil. The head of the school had given us an earlier libretto when he appeared as the author of "Jack and the Beanstalk," with music by Louis Gruenberg, composer of "Emperor Jones." That was a mere skit as compared to "Helen Retires." The new creation is satire and most palatable satire at that. It realizes successfully one object of satire, "to chastise manners with a smile." It was not to be expected that Mr. Erskine would part with Helen of Troy as long as there was a possibility of pursuing her through one more adventure of the insatiate woman soul.

His poem did not make a successful flight across the chasm between singers and audience. The composer displayed musical talent, but ineptitude in the treatment of his scenes. He lacked sense of the theatre and was without the trained opera composer's knowledge of what would carry and what would not. But probably the misconception of the whole second act, a misconception involving not only the musical setting, but the staging, was the most serious error in the entire production. The text of this act is delicious. The scene is the Island of the Blest and there we find the heroes of the Trojan War bemoaning their fate, but comforting themselves with the reflection that they are at

last safe from the evil wiles of Helen.

In the wails of the ghosts a composer might find poignant suggestions. Agamemnon says:

Ah, she was lovelier than music,
More shining,
Haunting as a dream.
Clytemnestra who killed me
Was but a woman faithless and desperate.
Helen was beauty itself.

But what did we receive? A scene filled with strange and inflexible shapes. The ghosts were all concealed behind clumsy profile masks reaching almost to the floor. They had no faces, no play of expression, no subtle eloquence of bodily movement, no gesture. They looked like cardboard dolls. And for their feelings, Mr. Antheil found no medium of communication better than prolonged recitative of lumbering impotence. When the climax of the scene, the descent of the shining Helen into the abode of the dead, was reached, the consternation of the heroes could not be projected over the footlights because the heroes were so many wooden images, and the music apparently derived its character from them.

It is she, the terrible.
Even here.
Hearken not to her;
Turn your eyes from her;
Think not of her.

It misses fire entirely, through the unhappy coöperation of bad stage craft and inept music. What a magic the illusion of the theatre can exercise when employed with cunning! In "Four Saints in Three Acts" a cellophane back drop, three or four set pieces, a company of actors with pliable bodies and mobile faces, well planned costumes and colors and groupings, together with emotional plausibility in the fluid music, give life and significance to these words of St. Ignatius:

Pigeons on the grass alas.
Pigeons on the grass alas.
Short longer grass shorter yellow grass,
pigeons large pigeons on the shorter longer
yellow grass alas pigeons on the grass.
If they were not pigeons, what were they?

And by the sheer power of stage illusion and the innate feeling of pure lyric music this is made to sound like poetic beauty. "Lyric music" implies no demand for song of the venerable types fastened on opera by Donizetti and the younger Verdi. But there should be some definite musical lines.

Virgil Thomson transmutes Gertrude Stein's cross-word puzzles into dramatic tone, frequently commonplace, often sheer burlesque, but always at least with musical definition. Mr. Antheil seems most of the time to be at a loss to know what to do with the librettist's perfectly clear disclosure of the feelings of his characters. Let us admit that there are scenes which could not be adequately delivered in song. These are spoken and there might well be more spoken dialogue in "Helen Retires." But when the lyric matter is provided, why not be lyric? The composer has been most successful when writing ejaculatory passages for chorus. Some of these have aptitude and dramatic point. What a pity that the scenes for two, such as that in the third act between Helen and the deluded ghost of Achilles could not have been wed to congenial song! But the music is intrusive and distracting. The text invited a better fate.

III

Of course, there has been learned comment on the modernist style of the Antheil score. But no habitual listener to music gives thought now to atonality and little to polytonality. Writing music in

two keys was new to American opera goers when Strauss' "Elektra" was produced by Oscar Hammerstein, but now it neither astonishes nor puzzles any save venerable persons whose intellectual development ceased twenty-five or thirty years ago. More important is the composer's adherence to the doctrine of the progressives that all the stock of classic phrases and cadences should be abolished. Even Gertrude Stein made no effort to rid herself of familiar and colloquial turns of daily speech.

The commonplaces of music will probably live as long as the art and not even the most radical need shudder when tempted to make a period by the modulation from dominant to tonic. In the incessant effort to avoid being commonplace the latest composers appear to tell us continually what not to do, but never what to do. What Mr. Antheil has offered us as melody is a sorry substitute for the old-fashioned kinds created by Wagner and Debussy. Yes, they are rejected by the progressive party as old fashioned. Shakespeare and Bunyan are old fashioned too, but like Bach they have their apologists. Indeed, the modernists smile indulgently on all who talk this way. They look upon us as those who, like Kipling's lady, never could know and never could understand. And all the time their secret sorrow is that we understand too well.

There has been another revelation of American talent this season in the production at the Metropolitan Opera House of "Merry Mount", book by Richard L. Stokes, music by Howard Hanson. The dramatic basis of this opera is a masculine nature tortured by suppressed desires. Lawrence Tibbett has made a strong portrait of the Puritan minister assailed by temptations of the flesh. But it is as an actor rather than as a singer that he has

succeeded. We are confronted in this opera with another musical play which is too often compelled to abandon the media of music in order to deliver its message.

The composer has succeeded brilliantly in his setting of the choruses of the Puritan fathers and mothers. These numbers are broad and characteristic communications of the rigorous rules of conduct and almost fanatical faith of the early settlers of New England. But there is little musical exposition of the emotions of Wrestling Bradford, who is about the only personage in the drama presenting a revelation of inner experience.

The staging of the opera is not in step with the theatre of these times. The action is generally on conventional operatic lines. There is little that creates illusion. There is a ballet which purports to body forth the unholy dreams of Bradford. This ballet is an effective demonstration of the inability of the opera to escape from its own traditions. There is a manifest attempt to be as modern as Broadway, but, merely stripping ballet girls accomplishes little.

IV

The cause of the repeated failure of American operas lies deeper than mounting and stage direction. It must be sought in the insufficient comprehension by both librettists and composers of the nature and methods of the theatre. They are continually trying to do things that any old playwright could tell them will miss fire. There is no use in trying to blink the fact that the writing of a play is not only a creative act, but also a craft. If the dramatist does not know the craft, he will rarely overcome the obstacles raised by his own ignorance.

The opera is a play whose points are made with music, not with action or the crackling of rapid dialogue. The most advanced minds among our young composers and librettists too frequently forget or are ignorant of that indisputable fact. In a recent magazine article Mr. Antheil points to the tremendous success of "Wozzeck" two years ago. What do these gentlemen mean by success? The applause of a handpicked audience, steeped in the doctrines promulgated by the League of Composers? What else did "Wozzeck" get? That it was not accepted by general consent as a welcome creation is beyond question. It has not become a feature of the repertory of any opera company. It is for all intents and purposes theatrically dead, and it died because it was musically sterile. Its points were not musical, but conversational.

The American composer has gained nothing by following the lead of that work. "Emperor Jones" has won wide attention, but the triumph belongs to Mr. O'Neill, not to Mr. Gruenberg. The music is negligible. The most eloquent instrument is the drum and that was in the spoken play. When Puccini found himself confronted with the tense moment of the

card play for the life of Johnson in "The Girl of the Golden West," he stopped all music except a deep murmur of basses pizzicato. When Verdi had to find music for the entrance of Othello to Desdemona's chamber with murder in his heart he, too, used the basses, but with what a marvelous difference! Verdi made his point with music, not by stopping the music.

Mr. Antheil resorted to spoken dialogue to prevent unintelligibility in certain scenes of "Helen Retires." Mr. Hanson did the same thing in "Merry Mount." Virgil Thomson, who had no dramatic message to deliver, was able to juggle operatic music so that not only the senses, but the minds of the audience were steeped in illusion. Yet the experienced observer could not escape the conviction that much of what "Four Saints" accomplished was fortuitous and that much more was due to the gravity with which the Negroes acted and sang. Finally, the hardened newspaper reporter, who goes daily to concerts and operas, cannot escape the conviction that the basic trouble with American opera is that the composers do not go to opera often enough to get even a reflection of its technic.

THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

Pharmacology

THE TRUTH ABOUT SOAP

By JEROME W. EPHRAIM

THE distinguishing merit of soap, if properly made, is that it is virtually non-injurious to anything that water alone will not harm. The anonymous inventor of soap should be regarded as one of the greatest of the benefactors of mankind. With all our advances in chemistry it remains the greatest solvent, the finest and safest cleanser known. It is relatively so cheap, it has become so much a part of the ritual of civilized living, that we take it for granted almost as much as we do sun and rain and air. Yet the universal use of soap is a comparatively modern phenomenon, its beginnings dating from about the Thirteenth Century, when the soap-makers of Europe first learned to make the product from the oil pressed from olives. This was a new departure; previously goat's tallow and wood ashes were the chief materials used. Indeed, it is highly probable that the sacrificial altar was the first soap factory, since the fat of a slain animal dripping through wood ashes would require only the addition of water to make soap.

On this theory soap was discovered rather than invented, but where or when nobody knows. The mention of soap in the Bible has been regarded by some as placing its origin before 1500 B.C., but it is probable that the word translated as soap actually refers to some sort of detergent clay. Apparently the first unquestionable reference occurs in the writings of Pliny,

who speaks of it as being esteemed as a remedy for skin diseases. But in spite of the Roman fondness for bathing, there is considerable doubt whether its use for cleansing purposes was ever very widespread in antiquity. The Romans combated dirt and "B. O." by the vigorous use of oil, fine sand and mechanical scrapers. The early soaps, being impure, were probably not well adapted to everyday use. Even after the art of soap-making began to be perfected in Spain and France, it took centuries to popularize the notion of cleanliness as we know it today. In Fifteenth Century England soap was a luxury; even in the Seventeenth Century (1665) Samuel Pepys could write: "My wife busy in going with her woman to a hothouse to bathe herself, after her being long within doors in the dirt, so that she now pretends a resolution of being hereafter very clean. How long it will hold I can guess."

In this country, until recent times, the making of soap was largely a home industry. The soap kettle and the lye barrel were part of the equipment of practically every household. The product was not very good—sometimes being marked by an excess of fat, sometimes by an excess of lye—but there was no essential difference between the method of manufacture used then and now—even when a million pounds of soap are "cooked" in a single kettle. The raw materials are still fats and oils plus an alkali, the chemical reaction resulting in soap and glycerine (glycerol), the latter usually being removed and sold

as a by-product. The number of available materials has of course been greatly extended; they include today such diverse substances as tallow, lard, bone fat, skin grease and numerous oils—olive, cocoanut, corn, palm, palm kernel, peanut, linseed, castor, rapeseed and even fish and whale oils. Various combinations of these ingredients produce soaps with slightly varying characteristics, yet the exact nature of the ingredients, provided they are high grade, may not be nearly as important as the care and technical skill with which the soap is made.

A credulous reader of advertisements might well think otherwise. By implication and innuendo it has been dinned into our ears that certain "precious" ingredients will give us beauty (and other graces) that Cleopatra might envy.

Indeed the blather of advertisers has been so great that to many doubtless the truth will sound untrue. But in the interests of common sense it may be just as well to come out with it at once, and as bluntly as possible: a good soap can be a good soap—and nothing more.

With a few reservations to be considered later, no soap can have any special performance quality beyond that of being a good cleansing agent. You may pay 50 cents or \$1 a cake for the beautifully colored, delightfully-scented product of a famous French perfumer, and if you are willing to pay that much for color and odor that is your own affair. But if you value facts, don't for a moment suppose that you are getting any mysterious virtues or merits; dye and perfume can cover a multitude of soap-making sins, and even assuming that your "imported" product came from Paris and not from Hoboken, the chances are that you are getting an article that *as soap* is inferior to the better American grades selling for a fifth or a tenth of the price.

The truth is that today we are making in this country consistently better soaps than are manufactured anywhere else in the world.

Nevertheless, the problem of choosing a good economical soap remains. Price is no criterion, and the special claims of manufacturers concerning "facial" or "complexion" soaps are no criteria either. The differences among soaps are determined by the fats and oils that enter into their composition and by the care with which they are made. What is wanted is a *mild, pure* soap. Purity is judged by the absence of foreign ingredients or adulterants; mildness by the absence of free alkali, which is perhaps the greatest single virtue any toilet soap can have. Free alkali irritates and dries the skin; except where deliberately introduced, as in the case of some laundry soaps, it is an indication of faulty or poorly controlled manufacture. Nevertheless, some toilet soaps, even those selling for high prices, *do* have free alkali, and not even the most expensive perfumes can compensate for this inexcusable defect.

There is a simple test, much used by old soap-makers, which anyone can apply. It consists in touching the soap lightly with the tip of the tongue. If a strong "biting" sensation results, the chances are that free alkali is present. To provide a basis of comparison, several soaps may be tested in this fashion at one time, including at least one sample known to have a fairly high alkali content, such as one of the cheaper yellow laundry soaps. A test of this kind naturally has its limitations, but any soap that bites or stings when touched with the tongue is not suitable for toilet use. It should be noted, however, that even a neutral soap will release a small amount of alkali in the presence of water. The art of the soap-maker consists in keeping this amount as small as pos-

sible; as an added precaution some toilet soaps are "superfatted"—*i.e.*, they contain an excess of free fatty acid—but even superfatting should be kept to a minimum, as too much fatty acid is also likely to prove irritating to the skin. A small amount, less than 1 or 2%, is not objectionable.

Popular delusions about soap afford the basis for many claims that cannot be substantiated. One is that a floating soap is likely to be "purer" than non-floating varieties. But any soap at all, even the poorest, can be made floatable by whipping air into it in the process of manufacture. When you buy a floating soap it is quite possible, even probable, that you will get a good product, but you will be buying air (and water) as well as soap. Another superstition, less prevalent now than formerly, is that transparency is a sign of purity. Actually, transparency is merely a kind of trick of the soap-maker's art; it has no significance whatever from the consumer's point of view, and it is sometimes achieved through the addition of adulterants, such as sugar. One transparent soap, which formerly had a world-wide reputation, was found to contain nearly 20% rosin, a substance which may have some value in laundry products, but is inadmissible in toilet soaps.

Then there is the magic word "Castile," which, owing to the short-sightedness and general depravity of certain manufacturers, has been deprived of all meaning. Originally, Castile soap, then almost wholly an imported product, was made entirely from olive oil with no added fats or other oils. Such a soap has certain advantages, the most important being that it is probably the mildest of all soaps and therefore especially suited for babies and for those whose skins are sensitive to the coconut, palm and allied oils contained

in virtually all toilet soaps. But adulteration and misrepresentation have long since captured the field. A few years ago the Federal Trade Commission endeavored to restrict the term Castile to products made solely or largely of olive oil. These efforts were nullified by a court decision, and today even a so-called Olive Oil Castile soap may contain practically no olive oil at all.

Indeed, standards are so low that ordinary toilet soaps are likely to be of better quality. The result is that any consumer, wishing to save money and get a good product, will do well to avoid Castile soaps altogether—unless he has some means of knowing that the brand he is buying actually conforms to the requirements of the United States Pharmacopeia, these requirements being in essence that it shall be made solely of olive oil and contain not more than a specified minimum of impurities. There is very little so-called Castile soap now generally available that meets all these requirements. Here and there a manufacturer may be able to supply it, but you will have to search. Even the "imported" products are now no better than the domestic ones.

Confusion is still further confounded by widely advertised statements that the presence of olive oil results in a natural greenish color in the soap. Actually, the color of a soap made from high-grade olive oil is white, turning to brown as it ages. If the soap is snow-white and remains so, it indicates the presence of other ingredients. From the best information available, a natural greenish color would seem to be *prima facie* evidence that the soap was made in part from olive oil "foots," which are the residue from the pressing of the olives. But this fact need not be construed as condemning any brand; from a technical and chemical point of view the soap may be perfectly

good: criticism goes to the point of confusing and miseducating consumers by unwarranted and misleading claims.

There are other fields where misrepresentation has been carried much further—sometimes, perhaps, with no definitely equivocal intent, yet practically always to the loss and deception of consumers. From the early days of soap-making it has appeared to be a plausible idea that you could incorporate medication into soap and thereby obtain a product that would have valuable therapeutic properties. The notion has received a good many hard jolts in recent years from qualified chemists, but the idea persists; there is still marketed a horde of soap products alleged to be of special value for the feet, for skin afflictions, for dandruff, odors and a score of other ills to which the flesh is heir. From the scientific point of view, any good toilet soap will do as much as, and perhaps more than, the most highly touted special-purpose soaps, and since you can buy a good toilet soap for a mere fraction of the cost of the special-purpose variety, it would seem as if consumers were paying a rather high premium for their misplaced faith in medication. The most plausible of these somewhat dubious products are the so-called germicidal soaps, some of which bear the names of famous pharmaceutical houses, yet it may be stated, on the authority of the best qualified experts in the field, that in practical use none of these products has any more germicidal power than plain soap alone.

Soap itself is a mild antiseptic, its chief value, in this respect, lying in its power to wash away dirt and bacteria. For an added disinfectant to be really effective it would have to be present in such amounts as to make the soap unsaleable or unfit for domestic use. In other words, you

would no longer have soap. But there are other objections. Many germicides—iodine and mercuric chloride, for example—react with the soap so as to destroy the value of the disinfectant and seriously to injure the detergency of the soap itself. Others, such as carbolic acid, evaporate so rapidly that it would be necessary to pack the soap in air-tight containers to retain even a minimum percentage of the germicide. Of course, they retain their smell for a long time, and many people have come to think that an unpleasant odor is the sign of antiseptic merit, just as we used to believe that a bitter taste was the best indication of an efficacious medicine.

Even at the time of manufacture a toilet soap rarely contains more than 3% of pure phenol (carbolic acid)—larger quantities would irritate sensitive skins—and the impossibility of this small amount exercising any efficient germicidal or deodorant action is conceded by anyone with the slightest knowledge of the subject. Another type of medication, once more popular than today, is represented by such ingredients as sulphur, bran, and similar substances which are insoluble in water. The net effect is merely to reduce the efficiency of the soap with no real offsetting advantage; but sulphur soaps, like carbolic soaps, have the dubious merit of giving off an offensive smell (enjoyed by some people), owing to a chemical reaction which slowly evolves hydrogen sulphide. In comparison, tar soaps are relatively pleasant, and may be good soaps if the wood tar content is not too large, but they cannot be more than good soaps, and frequently they are not even that. "Owing to the dark color of the product," says a soap-maker's guide, "a large amount of scrap soap of almost any quality or color can be worked into the soap." It is a known fact that when one of the smaller

soap-makers has a fire, his first thought is to salvage his damaged stock by turning it into tar soap. As the natural color of tar soap is brown, it is common practice to darken it by adding an aniline dye or lampblack, either of which would seem to be more desirable in shoe polish than in a cleansing agent designed for the hands, face or hair.

The list of disinfectants that have been introduced into soaps at one time or another could be extended almost indefinitely, but the consensus of modern scientific opinion is that soap is a very poor vehicle for medication of any kind. "Even if the disinfectant were effective," says one writer, expressing what would appear to be the last word on the subject, "its action would be nullified on account of low concentration, the short time of contact, and by the fact that soap is a cleanser, causing the disinfectant to be washed away as thoroughly as dirt itself. It is only common sense, therefore, to suggest that where an antiseptic action is desired the best method is to wash first and apply the medication afterwards. But soap itself being antiseptic, the medication may not be

necessary; in any event, the *purest* soap will in all probability be far superior to any other in disinfecting or germicidal power."

From this point of view all "therapeutic" additions may be regarded as adulterants. The same considerations apply with equal force to special "beauty" soaps alleged to contain cold cream or other "precious" ingredients of a cosmetic character; if present at all, their chief effect is merely to interfere with the action of the soap with no discernible benefit to anybody except the manufacturer, who is enabled to charge you a high price on the basis of plausible but highly specious claims. As a matter of fact, many dermatologists are of the opinion that the best treatment for the normal skin is regular washing with pure, mild soap, nothing else being required; but this so flatly contradicts the advice of all the beauty editors that it would appear to be the part of wisdom merely to record it without comment. In this sphere the beauticians can afford to laugh at the scientists, who have never been specially noted for their beauty anyway.

Aeronautics

DISCOMFORT IN THE SKY

BY FREDERICK R. NEELY

IN TWELVE years of flying I have been air-sick three times. The factors contributing to those periods of discomfort conform exactly to two of the four principal causes of airsickness as set forth by Dr. R. E. Whitehead, chief of the Medical Section of the Aeronautics Branch, Department of Commerce. Dr. Whitehead is the man who is responsible for the physical fitness of all licensed civil airmen and he has a corps of 300 doctors to assist him in this task.

These four causes are: (1) rough air, (2) poor ventilation, (3) unsettled physical condition, and (4) apprehension on the part of the passenger. If all four are present in a case of airsickness, you can rest assured that the passenger is sicker than he ever was or ever will be again. If only one or two are present, the passenger may feel a little green, although he can become thoroughly sick if he is at all disposed in that direction. But the mild cases of airsickness are soon disposed of. It is the major case that causes the passenger to forswear air travel forever.

Airsickness is by no means as serious a difficulty as seasickness. It occurs less frequently and seldom takes complete possession of the faculties of its victim. This is due, first, to the fact that the air is not so continuously disturbed as is the surface of the ocean, when the ocean is disturbed, and, second, to the shorter time required for an air journey. Even on a long trip, say from coast to coast, the air traveler has an opportunity every two or three hours to plant his feet on the solid earth. This is the most certain method of obtaining relief if there are any symptoms of the subject under discussion. On a boat the rolling or pitching may continue for several days, with the illness becoming progressively worse, and there is little opportunity to escape the sickening motion until the sea calms or port is reached.

Seasoned air passengers, even pilots, occasionally become ill if the air is unusually rough, or if their physical conditions are below par. But they do not live in dread of airsickness, and this is the important point to be considered by those who hesitate to fly because they fear they may be ill. If the air is calm, there is little or no likelihood that any adverse effects will be felt. Even during a rough trip, the passenger may avoid airsickness, or at least succeed in minimizing its effects, by recognizing the possibility that it may occur, and observing a few simple health rules.

The air lines are seeking to reduce this discomfort by providing adequate ventilation of the right kind in their cabins, and by instructing pilots to seek the calmest layers of air whenever possible. When a flight in rough air is unavoidable, the pilot can lessen discomfort by flying carefully. Close attention to the controls will keep the airplane from wallowing after hitting a bump, thus reducing the amount of up and down motion.

Another contribution to the problem which might be made by the operating companies would be a less conspicuous display of their preparations for airsickness. A cardboard container placed at the elbow of each passenger, for an obvious purpose, may be the deciding factor for some sensitive persons. Such paraphernalia could be stowed under the seats or in some other unobtrusive place.

Airsickness is usually induced by the unaccustomed motion to which the body is subjected when the airplane suddenly rises or drops, or rolls slightly from side to side, under the influence of air currents. In turbulent air, the aircraft may encounter a down draft, which will plunge it downward, or a rapidly rising column of air, which will lift it rapidly. If the pressure of such a vertical air current is not distributed evenly on both wings, it may cause one wing to drop lower than the other and the pilot then rights the plane by moving his ailerons. This has its effect on the passengers in the cabin.

Turbulent air is encountered in the vicinity of thunderstorms, and it sometimes is necessary for aircraft to skirt such storms during flight. But vertical air currents may also be encountered when the sky is clear, because of the difference in the rate of heat radiation from bodies of water, from cultivated land and from wooded areas. Furthermore, rough air is often present when winds are blowing at a high rate of speed. Night offers much quieter air and for that reason is preferred by many seasoned air travelers, including your correspondent.

From meteorological studies and flight experience as well, it has been found that even if the air is turbulent near the ground, a calm stratum may be found at a higher altitude. This gives the pilot an opportunity to avoid the rough air, although per

haps at the expense of some few minutes of time lost in climbing, and explains what is meant by the instructions which airline companies have given to their pilots to seek the calmest altitudes.

However, if the airline pilot with whom you are flying does not make any attempt to find calmer air at a higher altitude, it does not necessarily follow that he is neglecting his duties. He may have weather information showing that the disturbed air conditions continue to a high altitude, or that he would encounter a strong head wind aloft. This head wind would reduce his forward speed to such an extent that he would be far behind schedule in arriving at his destination, and late arrivals are a source of inconvenience and annoyance to passengers and expensive to the company. And a strong head wind aloft could also produce heavy bumps.

Again, the pilot may continue at a comparatively low altitude, even when the air is rough, because his next stop is only forty or fifty miles distant, and in that event, the time required for climbing to six or eight thousand feet would be too great. When there is a jump of 300 to 400 miles between terminals, and the air is rough in the lower levels, the extra minutes consumed in climbing to the higher altitude are well spent.

Authorities concur in the belief that the motion of the aircraft in rough air is the primary cause of airsickness. And most of them agree that poor ventilation is the most important secondary cause. If ventilation is inadequate, even the slightest amount of rocking or gentle rolling may induce the symptoms of airsickness.

The importance of ventilation in an aircraft cabin is well known to me. Recently I made a round trip of about 1200 miles between my home and another city, during which I flew in four different aircraft.

The first leg of the trip was in a large cabin airplane which had no individually-operated ventilators, but instead had an inlet for fresh air in the roof of the cabin towards the front, and an outlet for stale air at the back. Neither was controlled by the pilot. In fact, they could only be opened and closed when the plane was on the ground. I was the victim of an experiment by this particular air line which had in mind the elimination of the individual ventilators because they let in noise from the propellers and engines. True, it was quieter in the cabin, but it was also hot and smelly.

I had the rear seat and soon found that I was getting no fresh air. As we approached the mountains we began to bounce around. This, coupled with stale, hot air, soon developed a sinking sensation in my middle, which was followed by a symphony in four movements, *viz.*, nausea, headache, cold hands and profuse perspiration.

All the seats in the plane were taken and I couldn't move up front. I tried reading. I read page after page of a magazine and retained not one word. There was nothing to do but sit and suffer. More than once I turned an envious eye towards the door which was within arm's reach of me. In the valleys on the ground below were peaceful scenes of farmers plowing fields, of cows browsing in the barnyard with the chickens, of women hanging out the wash. How I longed to be with them!

At the end of three hours of this misery we landed at a junction of the airways to change to another plane. A few minutes on the ground enabled me to subdue the sick feeling. Then, when I entered the second ship, I found, much to my relief, that there were individual ventilators for each passenger.

We had a strong head wind, which apparently was stronger aloft because the

pilot stayed right down on top of the trees. At this altitude and with this wind, we were flying on a corduroy airway. The ship was several years old and its ventilators were of a design which had now given way to something better. With years of use, the moving parts had become so worn that the slipstream closed them and kept them closed! The heat and the extremely rough air attacked me with renewed vigor. A battle raged within me for another hour and finally I lost. My defeat had some virtues and the remainder of the journey found me weak and ashamed.

On the way into the city from the airport I compared notes with a fellow passenger. "Concentrated discomfort," he called it. "The worst ride I ever had and I've been riding the airlines for years. I'm going on by train tomorrow."

"So am I," was my forceful decision.

Tomorrow came and I had forgotten the details of the previous day's experience. I found that I could get a new, fast-flying airplane for the first half of the return journey, so I began to look forward with pleasure to the trip. As we left at noon, I avoided eating any lunch, but did take a sedative by way of preparation to keep my stomach locked in place.

This time we had strong tail winds aloft and the pilot pointed the nose straight at heaven and kept it there. At 10,000 feet we levelled off and in the cool, quiet air, glided along like a canoe on a lake at twilight. To my delight, I found an individual ventilator and, because I could, I let in blasts of cold air intermittently. An hour after taking off, the hostess served fried chicken for lunch and my stomach welcomed it. A delightful journey, the kind that makes your non-flying friends want to avoid you when you begin to describe it.

At the junction point I had to leave this comfortable ship and get back into the old

one in which I began my journey the previous day. I did not relish this and so informed the pilot with whom I had a speaking acquaintance. He suggested that I sit right behind him and this would not only enable me to get the benefit of the cockpit ventilator, but he would also see to it that his side window was kept open so I could be sure of fresh air. Our journey homeward from the junction of the airways lasted three hours, two of which were spent in dodging a string of thunderstorms. These storms churned the air for miles around and we bounced and banged about in the sky to such proportions that at times I became alarmed over the structural strength of the ship against such beatings. But all the while fresh air was pouring into the cabin, at least into seat No. 1 and I was lapping it up. I was feeling fine and enjoyed the rocky motion of the plane. I cannot say the same for the poor passengers towards the rear of the ship. I saw several greenish faces when I looked around. The remainder of the journey was completed in peace and quiet.

Thus the first two causes of airsickness, rough air and poor ventilation, working in unison, have spoiled many a flight for the 10,000,000 persons who have been passengers in aircraft since the government began keeping count.

The physical condition of the passenger is the third cause to be considered when trying to avoid airsickness. Indigestion, or any other disturbance involving an upset stomach, materially increases susceptibility to airsickness. Obviously, therefore, it is sensible to avoid these complications if an air trip is contemplated, by getting sufficient rest, and by eating and drinking in moderation.

Rich and greasy foods should not be eaten before the start of an air journey, but an ordinary breakfast, luncheon or dinner

may be taken with the choice of foods directed to those most readily digested.

Well I know this advice of Dr. Whitehead to be true. For years I flew around in Army and Navy open cockpit planes where you got fresh air all the time, including winter. Once I flew to another military post to cover a story for my paper and on our arrival we decided to get a bite to eat. We found luncheon over but the pilot took me to the kitchen where the cook gave each of us three nice greasy sausage cakes between two slices of soggy, freshly baked bread. This we washed down with black coffee, Army style. It filled the void in our stomachs. Two hours later on the way home we encountered rough air. We went in search of smoother conditions but to no avail. It was in the days before parachutes and years later the pilot confessed to me that if we had had 'chutes he would have abandoned ship and reported structural failure as the reason. And I was that ill, too.

For those susceptible to airsickness, the best foods to eat on board an aircraft are apples and crackers, and an alkaline effervescent beverage may be drunk. Frequent swallowing keeps the Eustachian tubes open, and prevents retracting of the ear drums because of varying pressures. Chewing of gum is of assistance in this connection.

The fourth ranking contributory cause, apprehension, generally disappears as experience in flying is gained. Those who fly a great deal become accustomed to the notion of the airplane, and their bodies are adjusted to it. They no longer sit tense and try to counterbalance the movements of the plane. When they learn from experience that the ship will not fall down out of control due to rough air, they relax and allow themselves to swing with it, a

not unpleasant sensation if one is prepared for it.

Apprehension sometimes besets the person who has never flown before, and who has never experienced seasickness. Hearing that air passengers sometimes become ill, his apprehension is increased because it is concerned with the unknown. Again, the occasional air passenger who has been airsick once may fear a repetition, and worry about it so much that he does become ill. If one passenger becomes ill, the more sensitive individuals among his companions are likely to follow suit.

The airlines are eager to find a complete solution of the problem of airsickness. Their operating departments are entirely sympathetic with sick passengers, and are constantly being goaded by the traffic departments to do something about it. However, even if airsickness is never completely licked, it will not be a deterrent to air travel, any more than seasickness has materially affected ocean commerce.

In the meantime, the air passenger can help himself by remembering that:

1. Fresh cool air from the individual ventilator will often stop a case of airsickness before it gets a foothold.
2. Rich or greasy foods should be avoided before the flight; apples and crackers are best while flying and an alkaline effervescent beverage is a satisfactory liquid.
3. The chewing of gum gives some assistance to the inner ear, and more to the imagination.
4. By fixing his attention on something—a map of the airway, a book, or a newspaper—he can often fortify himself against the possibility of airsickness.
5. The odds are heavily in favor of *not* becoming ill.

THE LIBRARY

The Russian Colossus

LENIN, By Ralph Fox. \$2. 5½ x 8¼; 320 pp. New York: *Harcourt, Brace & Company*.

DURANTY REPORTS RUSSIA, by Walter Duranty. \$2.75. 6 x 8½; 401 pp. New York: *The Viking Press*.

WOMAN IN SOVIET RUSSIA, by Fannina W. Halle. \$4.50. 5½ x 8¾; 409 pp. New York: *The Viking Press*.

MY RUSSIAN NEIGHBORS, by Alexander Wicksteed. \$1.75. 5¼ x 7¾; 218 pp. New York: *Whittlesey House*.

THE American attitude toward Russia since 1917, in the literary as well as in the political field, has not been one to gratify the watchful and cynical eye of Clio, but during the past two or three years there has been an appreciable improvement. Intelligence, honesty, and courage have gradually taken the place of stupidity, lying, and cowardice. True enough, we still have our Will Durants and Elisha M. Friedmans to disgrace the intelligence of America, but few people now take any stock in their gross libels upon the great historic phenomenon of contemporary Russia. Moreover, for every pismire of a Will Durant we now have a dozen Louis Fischers and William Henry Chamberlins, and for every "impartial statistician" of an Elisha Friedman we have a score of Maurice Hinduses. And over them all stands Walter Duranty, one of the greatest foreign correspondents ever to grace American journalism.

The four volumes under discussion are from the latest crop of books on Russia. They are all good. Mr. Fox's biography of Lenin is far from first-rate, as I shall pres-

ently show, but it is easily the best introductory approach to him which has yet appeared in English. The Duranty book is made up of reprints of selections from his correspondence to the *New York Times* in the years 1921-1933. The dispatches are generally written in sloppy English, but they stand up remarkably well, and in themselves form an admirable political history of Bolshevik Russia. Frau Halle's study of "Women in Soviet Russia," as ably translated by Margaret M. Green, is obviously the most intelligent and mature study of the place of women in the U.S.S.R., which has yet reached the American public. It will probably long remain the standard book on its subject. Mr. Wicksteed's volume is a far less ambitious project. He has been a teacher of English in Moscow for the past ten years, and in his book he attempts to give an idea of what it means to live in Soviet Russia—for the youth, for the peasant, for the proletarian, for the expectant mother, for the child, and for the foreigner. His brief and simple sketches are ably executed, and such consistently ignorant and almost uneducable people as American bankers, politicians, and labor leaders will perhaps not find them beyond their grasp.

Viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*, Lenin, along with Freud and Einstein, was one of the three truly great men who have walked the earth in our time. No matter what we may think of Communism as a way of life, Lenin's massive and overwhelming size is as obvious as Mt McKinley. To deny that fact is to deny one's mind. If Lenin was a demagogue

then so was Jesus. If he was a logical machine, then so was Aristotle. If he was a disturber of the peace of mankind, then so were Galileo, Giordano Bruno, and Darwin. He was one of the great prime movers of mankind. Considering the nigardliness of the Almighty in the matter of human grandeur, the world became a less interesting place to live in at 6:50 P.M., January 21, 1924, when a fourth stroke put an end to the life of Lenin.

Vladimir Ilyitch Ulianov, which was his real name, was born in Simbirsk, south of Kazan, on April 10, 1870. His paternal grandfather was a tailor and his father was an inspector of schools and a government meteorologist, which is to say, a middle class intellectual. Lenin attended the local public schools, but Mr. Fox assures us that he "certainly was no unpleasant youthful 'genius.'" He indulged in all the games of Russian boyhood, skiing, skating, tobogganing, and croquet. He learned to play the piano for a while, and then forgot all about it. Early in life he became an atheist, along with his brother Sasha, and though their father was a devout man, he did not try to force his children into the ways of the Russian church. Sasha was the young radical of the family circle, spending many of his boyhood hours in the close study of the works of Marx. Lenin, on the other hand, showed no interest in Marx, and instead steeped himself in the novels of Turgeniev. Then a ghastly tragedy hit the Ulianov household: Sasha was hanged for taking part in the attempt upon the life of Czar Alexander III. Only a short while before his father had died. Lenin was only seventeen, with a mother, a brother, and two sisters to support. He cast Turgeniev aside, and betook himself to the works of Marx, which his hanged brother had left behind.

As the brother of a hanged revolutionary, Lenin was a marked man. He wanted to study at Kazan University, and only the highest recommendations of the headmaster of the Simbirsk gymnasium, F. Kerensky, father of the one-hour hero Alexander Kerensky, convinced the authorities that he was really not so bad. But they had made a poor guess, for Lenin really was "bad." He was admitted to the university on August 15, 1887, and expelled on December 17 of the same year. The charges were "impoliteness" and talking with "suspicious" students. Four years later he managed to be admitted to the University of St. Petersburg, where he won a first class diploma in law. He took on a few cases, but he soon learned that he was not fitted to be a successful lawyer.

Meanwhile, he had steeped himself in the works of Marx, Engels, Bakunin, Lopatin, and especially Plekhanov. He was greatly attracted by the latter's revolutionary principle: "Propaganda gives many ideas to a small circle of persons, but agitation a single idea to the masses." The Russian famine of 1891 had made a strong impression on Lenin, and at St. Petersburg he founded the Militant Union for the Liberation of the Working Classes. He organized strikes among the factory workers, but they all turned out to be useless. Nevertheless, he had shown the radicals how to organize and carry on a strike. He had shown them that appealing to the workers abstractly in behalf of the general advancement of humanity was pure folly. The workers were chiefly interested in the alleviation of their own miserable lot, and hence it was the task of strike organizers to point out the horrible working conditions to the workers, and also to suggest to them definite demands to present to the employers—the eight-hour day, rest periods, sanitary surroundings, etc. The

principles herein involved were new to the Russian radicals, and their deadly work from then on did much to pave the way for the days of 1917.

In 1897 the police arrested Lenin chiefly for printing the *Workers' Cause*, perhaps the first Social Democratic newspaper in Russia. He was sentenced to serve three years in Siberia, and shortly thereafter the magnificent Krupskaya followed him there. She was allowed to be in prison with him in Siberia only on the condition they be legally married. Lenin devoted the three years in prison to writing his book on the "Development of Capitalism in Russia." He had already written a number of vigorous pamphlets, but this was his most ambitious work to date. At the end of his prison term he went to Munich and later to Switzerland, where he edited the *Iskra* (the Spark), which was printed secretly by workingmen in Munich and London. It rapidly became the Bible of Communists the world over, and it contained some of Lenin's most fiery and devastating polemics. In 1903 he went to London to attend the second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party. It was there and then that Lenin split the party into the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks.

His old friends Martov and Plekhanov were against him, but he held out to the end. Lenin wanted to make the party a truly proletarian revolutionary party, while the Mensheviks wanted it to be the Russian counterpart of Fabianism. With this split Lenin gave up control of the *Iskra*, but it was not long before he had a new paper, *Vperiod* (Forward).

In 1904 came the Russo-Japanese war, and in his Geneva exile, at that "accursed distance," he followed events closely, and wrote voluminously upon them, and with his usual hard-headedness and perspicacity.

The fall of Port Arthur saddened him because of the heavy loss of Russian lives, but he also saw much to learn from it:

Wars today are waged by the peoples, and for this reason the great essence of war today stands out with peculiar sharpness: unmasking in action, before the eyes of tens of millions of human beings, that lack of anything in common between the people and the government. . . . The surrender of Port Arthur is the prologue to the surrender of Czarism. The war is far from finished, but every step in its continuation widens the immeasurable ferment and indignation among the Russian people, brings near the occasion of a great new war, a war of the people against autocracy, a war of the proletariat for freedom.

With these words Lenin spoke more truly than he knew, for a few days afterward, on January 9, 1905, there took place in St. Petersburg one of the most brutal massacres of workers in all history. It has been correctly labelled ever since as Bloody Sunday. Lenin heard the news the next morning. He exclaimed, "War is declared in Russia! Revolution is a war, the only lawful, justifiable, really great war of all the wars known to history." He smuggled his way into St. Petersburg, hunted up Bolshevik illegal workers, urged them to propagandize among the peasants, soldiers, and sailors (proposing especially the confiscation of all landlords' lands), and sent them off hurriedly in search of ammunition and more ammunition. But all his efforts were too late—and too early. The peasants, soldiers, and sailors thought that a revolution consisted merely in refusing to obey the orders of their landlords and superior officers. They had not yet learned that a revolution was first and foremost an offensive military move. Lenin had been preaching this for years to his revolutionary colleagues, but they had taken his principles half-heartedly, and he was in exile too long and too far away to spre-

these basic revolutionary ideas himself. Lenin was broken hearted, but he took the opportunity to organize in St. Petersburg the Workers' Soviet, and for a while things began to look up, but then the police and government agents got wind of his plans, and all was lost. He boiled with rage at the incompetence of those he trusted:

What are all these promised freedoms when armed force remains in the hands of the government? . . . Here you need frantic energy, and still more energy. With horror—yes, by God, with horror—I see you have been talking of grenades for more than six months and haven't yet made one! And it's very learned people talking. . . . Go to the youth, gentlemen! That's your sole, all-saving means. Otherwise, by God, you'll be late (I can see that all right), and will be left with learned notes, plans, sketches, schemes, excellent recipes, but no organization, nothing live. Go the youth. Found at once fighting squads, everywhere, both of students and especially of workers, and so on, and so on. . . . Rifles, revolvers, bombs, knives, sticks, rags soaked in kerosene for fires, ropes or rope ladders, spades for making barricades, clubs, flares, and barbed wires, nails for use against calvary, etc., etc.

Lenin returned stealthily to "accursed Geneva," by forging passports and God knows what else. He was very low in spirits, but that was only a sign for him to renew his efforts. He said:

There are such occasions when the masses, for some reason or other, desert the battlefield, and then that leader or that general is a bad one, who, when he is left alone, can't defend his colors. There are occasions when one has to stand alone to preserve the purity of one's flag.

He roamed about Switzerland, Austria, and France, spending most of his time in the libraries, writing one pamphlet after another, urging the Russian workers to organize more efficiently, to harp upon the

misery of the proletariat and the peasantry, and to collect ammunition. How his pamphlets reached Russia, nay, how they were printed wherever they were printed, is still something of a mystery, but Lenin was a master of illegal activity. He knew the revolutionary underground of Europe better than any other human being has ever known it, and the number of people who were willing to risk their lives for him ran into the hundreds. Occasionally he would almost despair, and he would confide his misery to Maxim Gorki. Of one thing he was always sure: a general European war was bound to come. He saw this way back in 1908, when he said to Gorki:

War is coming. It is inevitable. The capitalist world has reached the stage of putrescent fermentation. People are already beginning to poison themselves with the drugs of chauvinism and nationalism. I think we shall yet see a general European war. . . . The proletariat, of course, will suffer terribly. Such must be its fate for some time yet. But its enemies will weaken each other; that also is inevitable.

When the World War did come, he followed every move with an eagle's eye, and the scorn he heaped upon the Socialists who leaped to the "defence" of their country hardly knew any bounds. His pet hatred was Karl Kautsky. He said: "Kautsky is more hypocritical, disgusting, and harmful than anyone else. His internationalism consists, if you please, in the workers of one country shooting the workers of another under the pretence of 'defence of the fatherland.' . . . I loathe and despise Kautsky . . . a filthy, rotten, and self-satisfied hypocrite." He was disgusted with the ways things were going. He said: "One bloody lump, that is the socio-political life of the historic period through which we are now passing."

Then came the Russian Revolution of

February-March, 1917. He at once found his way into Russia, and he had no sooner set his foot on Russian soil than he urged the revolutionaries to revolt against Kerensky.

Comrade sailors, I greet you without knowing yet whether or not you believe all the promises of the Provisional Government. But I am convinced that when they talk sweetly to you, when they promise you a lot, they are deceiving you and the whole Russian people. The people needs peace, the people needs bread, the people needs land. And they give you war, hunger, no bread, leave the landlords on the land. . . . We must fight for the social revolution, fight to the end, until the full victory of the proletariat. Long live the world social revolution!

That very day Kerensky was virtually defeated. Lenin, with his uncanny feeling for the desires of the downtrodden, told them exactly what they wanted to hear, and when he set up his own Bolshevik government within the Kerensky government, the first thing he did was to declare the land of all landlords confiscated. He did more. He immediately organized soviets of workers and peasants and of soldiers and sailors, thereby assuring them at once the very say in the government which they had secretly wanted all along. Kerensky gave the people fine oratory, but Lenin gave them bread and land and real freedom, and the outcome of the struggle between the two was inevitable. He preached the finest gospel of all, the gospel of honesty and freedom:

The one thing responsible for the failure of all revolutions is the high-sounding phrase, flattery of the revolutionary people. . . . Learn how to rule; there is no one to stop us. . . . The art of government cannot be got out of books. Try, make mistakes, learn how to govern.

He did not consult Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador, or M.

Maurice Paléologue, the French Ambassador, as Kerensky did. Instead, he listened to the grievances of coal miners, factory workers, peasants, soldiers, and sailors. He spoke their language, they trusted him, and they made the Bolshevik revolution of November 7 possible. Kerensky, of course did not give up for some time, and Lenin was forced to employ every weapon in his revolutionary arsenal to beat him, but in the end he beat him completely and utterly. It would be a pleasure to discuss in detail his magnificent strategy in the months between March and November 1917, but I haven't the space. His timing of the actual Bolshevik coup was one of the miracles of revolutionary history. One of the defects of Mr. Fox's book is that he gives so little space to the matter.

In fact, the whole last third of his book is unsatisfactory. Up to March, 1917, it is a pretty good introduction to the study of Lenin, but thereafter it becomes skimp and in places almost unintelligible. He is particularly weak in his discussion of the New Economic Policy (NEP), and also in his analysis of the politico-economic maneuvers, almost lightning-like in their swiftness, after November 7. Finally, he is somewhat childish in his labored attempt to belittle the work of Trotsky. He even goes so far as to say that Trotsky was no more than a military commander and that the real leaders in the Red Army against the anti-Bolshevik invasions of Wrangel and Denikin, *et al.* were Lenin and Stalin, than which nothing could be more untrue. Mr. Fox is a Stalinite Communist but that hardly gives him the right to distort history. But these defects aside, his book is the best brief study of Lenin now available in English.

He thinks that "perhaps history will eventually record him not as the leader of the Russian Revolution, for that would

have happened without Lenin, but as the creator of a new kind of political life, of a new kind of political party." There is much room for doubt that the Russian Revolution, at least as it has come down to us today, would have been the same without Lenin. A revolution of some kind was inevitable. The Bloody Sunday of 1905 and all Russian history from then on till 1917 saw to that, but I am not so certain that Kerensky would have been ousted without the persistent nay-saying and nay-doing of Lenin. He knew precisely the sort of revolution he wanted, far better than Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, or Stalin, and without his determination, his almost incredible determination, Russia might now well be only another liberal democracy, with Kerensky or some other charlatan as its guiding genius.

Whatever one may think about liberal democracy, had it succeeded in Russia, it would have hardly suited the people there. As Mr. Duranty says in his excellent book, Communism is giving "Russia's 150,000,000 peasants and workers—what they really want, namely, joint effort, communal effort; and communal life is as acceptable to them as it is repugnant to the Westerner. This is one of the reasons why Russian Bolshevism will never succeed in the United States, Great Britain, France, or other parts west of the Rhine." Lenin, in Mr. Duranty's words, "one of the very rare and greatest men," was thus a veritable God-send to the Russian people. It is therefore easy to understand why there was such consternation in the Soviet country when President Kalinin announced the death of Lenin. I quote Mr. Duranty:

From all over the huge opera house came sobs and wailing, not loud or shrill, but pitifully mournful, spreading and increasing. Kalinin could not speak. . . . Kalinin tried to tell the funeral arrangements, but

broke down completely. Kamenev and Zinoviev, equally unnerved, and other members of the presiding committee had laid their heads on the table and cried like children. Even the daredevil Cossack leader Budyenny was weeping unrestrainedly, while the delegates in the body of the theatre stood motionless, sobbing, with tears running down their cheeks.

Incidentally, Mr. Duranty's dispatches to the *New York Times*, during the last week of January, 1924, about the death of Lenin are among the most magnificent in the history of American journalism. If professors of journalism had any sense they would make them compulsory reading in all their classes. He has shown himself, throughout the past twelve years, to be a foreign correspondent of a very high order. He never fell for the nonsense that Stalin was a politician and nothing else, as a cheap journalist argued four or five years ago in a book which took in nearly every reviewer in the United States. Way back in January, 1923, Mr. Duranty saw the real size of the man. He said: "It is to him that the greatest part of the credit is due for bringing about the new Soviet Union, which history may regard as one of the most remarkable constitutions in human history. Trotsky helped him in drawing it up, but Stalin's brain guided the pen." On the other hand, Mr. Duranty did not falsify history with regard to Trotsky, as Mr. Fox has done. He said of him that he was the man "whose unsparring energy made the Soviet revolution live."

Mr. Gustavus Tuckerman, Jr., of New York University, who compiled and selected Mr. Duranty's dispatches, has carried out his task with skill, but he has done him a disservice by appending some of Mr. Duranty's verses. They are thoroughly worthless, and should have been left out. And what earthly reason was

there in asking the Town Crier, Mr. Alexander Woolcott, to write an introduction? It is taffy.

Frau Halle's book, as I have said, is plainly the best study of women in Russia that has yet reached the American public. Lenin had an abiding interest in the welfare of women. "Every cook," he said very early, "must learn to rule the state." "We must root out the ancient outlook of the lord and master to the last fibre. In the party and among the masses." With this principle in mind, the Soviets opened all public and semi-public offices to men and women alike. Their protective legislation for working women is without question the most enlightened in the world, and their laws are actually enforced. The civilized nature of their marriage and divorce laws are too well known to need comment.

And so is their kind and humane treatment of prostitutes. Frau Halle's sections on this phase of Soviet work are among the best in her book, especially her report of a conference of ex-prostitutes who had been discharged as cured from the state prophylactorium, and had been placed in respectable jobs by its agents.

Our own pinched, fidgety, and befuddled social workers could justify their existence if they took a trip to Russia and learned what real social work is like. But perhaps I am preaching the impossible, for our American ladies would first have to get rid of their big-bad-wolf ideas about sex, before they could learn anything in Russia, and purifying American social workers probably takes more than a 5,000 mile trip on the ocean. It takes a new set of parents, a new set of grand-parents, and a new set of great-grand-parents, not to speak of a changed American society. But fortunately the Jane Addamses and Lillian Walds are not immortal. CHARLES ANGOFF

The Cult of Modern Art

ART NOW, by Herbert Read. \$3.75.
5½ x 7⅞; 144 pp. New York: Harcourt,
Brace & Company.

IN THE present work Professor Read has attempted to establish the latest tendencies of art upon a philosophical basis. He has succeeded admirably, but the nature of his success entitles him to no special consideration. He belongs to that small and dwindling sect of intellectual aesthetes who believe, or profess to believe, that art is one thing, living another; he erects his theories upon the snobbish postulate that art is above the common experiences of man, that is to say, he restricts the significant factors of production to a few souls endowed with abnormal sensibilities, and the factors of appreciation to a handful of specialists familiar with introspective psychology. He becomes therefore the latest, and perhaps the last, defender of the modern School of Paris, committing himself to the subjective manias and private agonies of a group of artists who pride themselves in having no commerce with the realities of life.

The substance of the professor's æsthetic is clearly indicated in the preface of his book. "Modern art is inevitably modern," he writes, "but its modernity is expressed in terms which are strictly artistic, and these are the result of developments within the technique and science of art." Proceeding from this admitted fact, he reviews the historical changes in the critical attitude toward art from the dissolution of the classical conception to the rise of empiricism, the contributions of the psychological school of Fechner, Lipps and Thompson, and the discoveries of the Freudians. His writing in these chapters is excellent; he is definite and refreshing in brief. But when he comes to the me-

ernists, and begins to read profound meanings into mechanical processes, he is as vague and unconvincing as any visionary artist.

The fundamental error of Professor Read's argument lies in his effort to identify the development of painting with the historical changes in the science of æsthetics. As a matter of fact, the science of æsthetics had little to do with the collapse of the classical tradition, the growth of the academy, and the events leading to the formation of the present School of Paris.

The descent of painting from the larger centers of human interest to the dealer, the museum, and the connoisseur, was the direct consequence of its loss of function. When art ceased to serve the beliefs, ideals, and experiences of large groups of people, it retired into the ivory tower. The history of painting from the Renaissance to the present time is the history of an art which, in the absence of any social office, has been saved from complete extinction by an interest in optical phenomena and in the manipulation of its technical implements.

When Professor Read asserts that Picasso, expressing the modern attitude, has conceived pictures which have no parallel in the past, he is not altogether accurate. He forgets that Picasso, and all his disciples, are careful to point out their traditional affiliations: they believe that they have returned to the classical point of view because they have re-discovered the classic organization of things. They forget that the classical conception, a work of art is not an organization for its own sake but a communicative instrument.

But it is perfectly true, as Professor Read says, "that modern art is the result of developments within the science and technique of art." Picasso, the acknowledged

leader, is a typical schoolman. He is at the service of no representational needs, at the service of nothing in the real world. He is concerned with materials and problems which reside in art, not in life; he is not interested in what is put together, only in how it is put together. An art of this character runs inevitably into abstractions, eclectic combinations, rhetorical flourishes, and irrelevant gestures. It has no content of any sort, and thus no meaning, although anything may be read into it by irresponsible fantasy or astute pleading.

Professor Read's effort to attach meanings to Picasso's mechanical contrivances will convince nobody. When he tells us that "modern painting expresses the inexpressible," and that individuality is best revealed by naked geometry, "by the process of abstraction which, by removing the mask of sentimental actuality, leaves the personality free to shine out clearly," he is talking the high-toned drivel of the fashionable purist.

This book, I venture to predict, is one of the last of its kind. In some respects it is a superior work—superior in scholarship and in writing—but in its conclusions it coincides with the precious utterances of the Bloomsbury purists, the treatises of the cultural experts of Paris, and the table talk of the East Side-Harvard school of æsthetics.

As a philosophy of art, it is unworthy of the name; as the philosophy of a particular sect of artists, it is gospel truth—a systematic presentation of the cult of special sensibilities and esoteric symbolism. An honest advocate of this cult, Professor Read has no choice but to commend, as the highest expression of æsthetic sensibility, the Sur-Realists, a diminutive sect of demented painters who distort the facts of life to fit the ghastly patterns of their little nightmares.

THOMAS CRAVEN

Dr. Johnson Again

SAMUEL JOHNSON, by Hugh Kingsmill.
\$2.75. 6¼ x 9½; 249 pp. New York: *The Viking Press*.

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON is today enjoying another bright season of post mortem fame. With the reëntry of morality into literary criticism the huge figure of the good English Doctor looms in the doorway to be admired. Despite Boswell and despite the brilliant industry of Scott and Pottle in rediscovering evidence of his peculiar genius, Johnson himself remains inexhaustible. With rolling head and nervous hands, he is a permanent fixture in English literature.

As a matter of fact, Johnson's significance in literary history is a dramatic one, for he emerged as a Leviathan swimming against the fashionable current of his time. During the middle Eighteenth Century London literary society was best exemplified by a Lord Chesterfield who reflected the ambition of an island court life to affect the graces of the Continent. London had become a true metropolis, admitting, through a wide foreign trade, the sophistication which rises from an international variety of beliefs, manners, customs. Middle-aged Johnson reared from the pages of his dictionary as a primeval moral force, a British Jehovah, didactic, provincial, who had come to scourge the devil out of his own soul and out of England. Though he had the radical Tory's respect for form and order, his business was to snatch literature from the hands of an effeminate court and reunite it with the routine of daily experience. That experience happened to be the common-sense morality of a rising middle class. To Johnson, literature *was* life, and as such its standards had a final test in his own moral behavior and personality.

To reread Johnson's "Lives of the Poets" and Boswell's "Johnson" is to participate in the revelation of a great individual character, an experience that his present biographer fully appreciates. Johnson, stirred from his lethargy at the last possible moment and writing at superhuman speed, retained the characteristic flow of his conversation in everything he wrote. The heavily weighted prose had gained a flexibility unequaled in Eighteenth Century writing, for Johnson managed (as Theodore Dreiser manages today) to leave no loophole open for misunderstanding or what lay in his mind. One may reject his specific prose instrument, and his myopic bat-winged æsthetic, and with them, all the superstitious detail of his morality, yet one cannot ignore the essential greatness of his performance.

The present biography illuminates for a brief moment the dark background of his boyhood and his early career in London; and under Mr. Kingsmill's intelligent eye, Johnson reëmerges a consistent, well-motivated human being. He has a canny understanding of those hidden sources that produced Johnsonian melancholy, and with a deft hand, he separates truth from falsehood in disclosing Johnson's friendship for Mrs. Thrale: that lady is now henceforward released from the responsibility of honoring a dead husband and nursing a dying lexicographer. Mr. Kingsmill defends her ably and tells his story well.

One is quite unwilling, however, to accept Mr. Kingsmill's attempt at literary revaluations, for worldly as he may be (and is) in analyzing human character, he is naïve enough to suppose that Johnson *might have been* a great dramatic poet and that under his humorless explosion of irony lay the wit of another Rabelais.

HORACE GREGORY

Those Good Old Days

THEY ALL SANG. *From Tony Pastor to Rudy Vallée.* As told to Abbott J. Liebling by Edward B. Marks. \$3.50. 6¼ x 9½; 321 pp. New York: *The Viking Press.*

THE good old days are customarily viewed with moist eye and a catch in the throat, and nothing is more calculated to arouse nostalgic lamentations than the recollections of an old-timer who was in on the high spots of the glamorous past. At first sight, the present volume would appear to be just such a book of reminiscences. Its material covers the favorite objects of tearful veneration: old songs, singers, actors and composers once the darlings of the public eye and ear, but now gone forever. There are photographs of Lillian Russell and Anna Held in all their bulbous charms. The title-pages of old popular songs—quaintly embellished with pictures of minstrels and hoofers like Harrigan and Hart or Delehanty and Hengler—return photostatic resurrections. Weber and Fields, Tony Pastor's, George M. Cohan, a lad, the young Romie Kern—all the mortals and their habitats are once more presented in amusing anecdotes and side-looks.

But there is more in this book than appears on the surface. The underlying purpose of its rambling and almost casual style is to depict how a popular song is written, published, plugged, admired and gotten. Mr. Marks has successfully published these songs for forty years, and he under no illusions about the nature of the trade. "The best songs came from the street in those days," he says.

Indeed, when I began publishing in 1894, there was no surer way of starting a song off to popularity than to get it sung as loudly as possible in the city's lowest dives. If a publisher knew his business, he always launched a sales campaign by impressing

his song on the happily befogged consciousness of the gang in the saloons and beer halls. When a number was introduced from the stage of one of the more pretentious beer halls, that was a plug!

The trail then led through brothels and pothouses, lurched through tawdry nickelodeons and dance halls, and reached the heights when it entered the more garish cabarets. Prostitutes and prizefighters were of invaluable assistance in boosting sales, and the most effective technique was to have a crowd of drunken hicks drool the choruses with the raucous plugger on the platform. They carried the tunes back home, and thus to nation-wide popularity.

Mr. Marks recites all this with an acrid humor. But what finally emerges is really a murderous portrait of a strangely sordid and depressing scene. The song writers, almost without exception, are a crew of ignorant, unoriginal and irresponsible sots. Most of the stuff they write is not only plagiaristic, trivial and bathetic in the extreme, but is deliberately contrived to follow the commercial fashions of the day. The performers are mostly uncultured and naïve monkeys. The public that buys the stuff, finally, is just a vast mob of sentimental hypocrites who relish this tawdry revelry, and who would reject anything better even if it were offered to them.

Ironically enough, this is the only form of musical expression which has any genuine vitality in American life. It occupies for us the same position that the Lutheran hymns did for the German congregations of Bach's and Beethoven's time.

The book makes no pretensions at being a serious sociological or critical document, but its oblique implications give it a distinct value in this direction. A word of praise should be added for Mr. Liebling, who turned the material into racy and colloquial language. EDWARD ROBINSON

THE AMERICAN MERCURY AUTHORS

GEORGE W. ASPINWALL is the pen-name of a New York surgeon, who has made important contributions to the surgery of the nose, ear and throat. He is a member of the leading American medical societies.

R. P. BLACKMUR contributes verse and criticism to the reviews.

S. MILES BOUTON has been a European correspondent for American newspapers for more than twenty years, most of them spent in Germany. He is the author of several books.

ROBERT M. COATES is the author of "The Eater of Darkness," "The Outlaw Years," and "Yesterday's Burdens."

THOMAS CRAVEN is the author of "Men of Art" and "Modern Art."

LAWRENCE DENNIS was in the United States diplomatic service for seven years, and with J. & W. Seligman & Company for three years. He is the author of "Is Capitalism Doomed?" and "America Faces Fascism." The latter book will be published soon.

JEROME W. EPHRAIM of New York is founder of a unique enterprise now in its third year, designed to supply consumers, largely by mail, with a variety of products made and described in accordance with the newer ideas of "buymanship." He is author of "Consumers' Guide to Scientific Buying and Saving," an unusual type of booklet giving terse, objective data, instead of advertising appeals.

HORACE GREGORY is the well-known poet, literary critic, and translator. His books include "Chelsea Rooming House," "No Retreat," and "Pilgrim of the Apocalypse."

W. J. HENDERSON has been music critic for the New York Sun since 1902. He is the author of numerous books.

FREDERICK R. NEELY is chief of the Aeronautic Information Section of the Federal Department of Commerce. He was formerly editor of an aeronautic magazine, and general manager of an aeronautic association.

RUTH L. PORTERFIELD is the pen-name of a college graduate, who was a magazine editor for seven years.

RAYMOND POSTGATE's article in this issue will form part of a book, "How to Make Revolution," which will be published shortly. He is the author of half a dozen other books of history and politics.

EDWARD ROBINSON devotes most of his time to the writing of music criticism.

WILLIAM SAROYAN was born in California in 1908. He says he is a "capitalist, Communist, etc." His story in this issue is the first in THE AMERICAN MERCURY.

GEORGE E. SOKOLSKY is the author of "Tinder Box of Asia." He spent many years in the Far East, and has written extensively on China and Japan for the New York Times.

ANNA LOUISE STRONG, Ph.D. (University of Chicago), has resided in Russia for a greater part of the last ten years, and has been Russian correspondent for a number of newspapers and magazines. She has lectured at Smith, Vassar, Columbia, and Stanford. In 1930 she organized the Moscow News, the first English newspaper in Russia. She is the author of several books of verse, history, and psychology.

ANTHONY M. TURANO is a lawyer in Reno, Nevada.

THOMAS WOLFE is the author of "Look Homeward, Angel." He is at work on his second novel.

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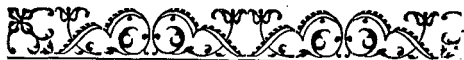


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Continued from front advertising section
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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

DOLLARS.

By Lionel D. Edie. *The Yale University Press*
\$2.50 5 1/4 x 8 1/4; 293 pp. New Haven

Though written by a former professor of finance at the University of Chicago, this is a superficial discussion of monetary problems. Mr. Edie believes in "reformed" gold standard in which only central banks would be permitted to draw on each other's gold supply. He wants a stabilization of exchange rates between silver-using countries and the rest of the world, but he does not indicate clearly how a desirable result is to be brought about. He demands a "checking of excessive migratory movements of liquid capital across national boundaries". He wants central banks to direct their policy to the stabilization of world price levels. He wants the United States to strive to attain a monetary standard "which accomplishes both internal and external stability", "to adopt an exchange rate which represents equilibrium between its cost of production and price level and those of other countries." These ideas are in line with many of those popular at the moment. Mr. Edie does not seem to realize that for the most part he is merely setting down desiderata as if they were solutions. Most of the specific policies proposed would merely increase the evils of which he complains; and in some cases—as when he insists on the maintenance of a proper ratio between agricultural and non-agricultural prices—he is demanding something that no monetary policy can possibly achieve.

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS AND INDUSTRIAL CONTROL. *A Critique of the N. R. A.*

By Simon N. Whitney, Ph.D.

The Central Book Company
\$2.50 6 x 9; 237 pp. New York

About one-half of this volume is devoted to a history and analysis of the American trade association movement; the rest is one of the ablest criticisms of the New Deal—particularly of the N. R. A.—that has yet appeared. Mr. Whitney has no faith either in the Administration's theory of recovery or in the theory of reform. He shows that the cartelization of German business, so far from stabilizing volume of business and employment in Germany, has rather the opposite effect. He analyses the bad and sometimes disastrous effects that have followed previous schemes similar to our present effort to fix prices and restrict production under the A. A. A. and

Continued on page xii



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Continued from page x

N. R. A. His own belief, with certain qualification is in a system of free competition which the government would be constantly vigilant to keep alive. It is not completely confident that this policy will be adopted, but he is convinced that the peculiar mixture of competition, combination and control embodied in the N. R. A. must fail. Mr. Whitney formerly taught economics at Yale; he has also been attorney with the anti-trust division of the Department of Justice.

FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND FIVE YEAR PLAN. *A Symposium.*

The International Publishers
\$1.50 5½ x 7¼; 490 pp. New York

Herein are brought together the important speeches made before the Central Control Commission of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, January, 1933. The following Russian leaders are represented: Stalin, Molotov, Kuibyshev, Orjonikidze, Kaganovich, Yakovlev, Voroshilov, and Grinko. The name of the translator is not given. A useful reference book.

FICTION

THE PRODIGAL FATHER.

By Richard Church. *The John Day Company*
\$2.50 5 x 7¼; 309 pp. New York

Mr. Church has taken the hackneyed theme of the misunderstood father and written a graceful original story around it. Though "The Prodigal Father" makes no reference to contemporary stress, the characters emerge as vivid and important personalities, through the sheer strength of the writing, and the fine sensitiveness with which Mr. Church traces their reactions.

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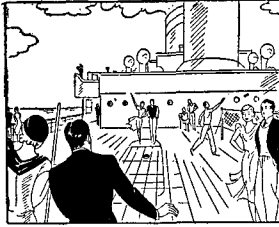
By Phyllis Bentley. *The Macmillan Company*
\$2.50 5½ x 8; 435 pp. New York

Taking the small English mill-town of Hudley as a background—a microcosm typical of the general scene—Miss Bentley gives a vivid presentation of world-wide industrial crisis. "A Modern Tragedy" is major in scope, and written with an authentic knowledge of our times. Many aspects of industrial conflict are treated: the passing of the old-fashioned ethical entrepreneur, the ruthless machinations of finance capital, the growing discontent and solidarity of labor. But while these themes combine to form the social background authenticity and completeness of the tragedy that Miss Bentley writes about is primarily a moral one, the tragedy of young Walter H. whose undoing arises from a weakness of will and his own conflicting desires.

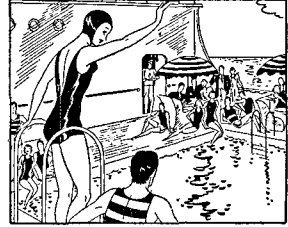
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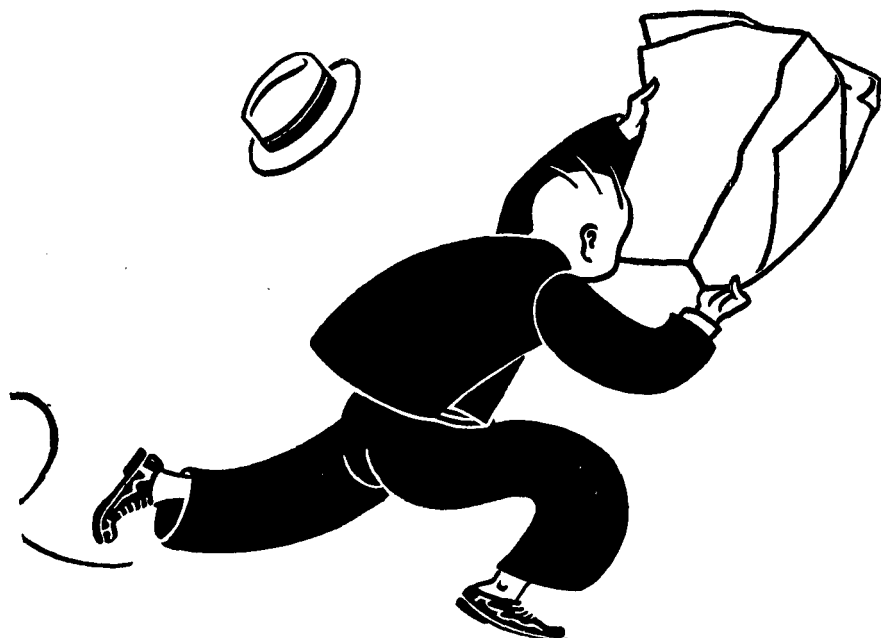
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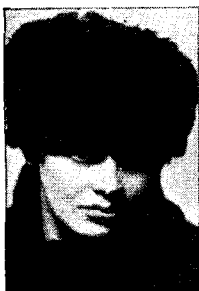
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Mr. Knopf's New Books

Storm Jameson's new novel, *Company Parade*, is far wider in scope and far greater in theme than anything she has attempted before.



The scene of the book is London, the time the period immediately after the war, and the characters, of whom there are many, are drawn from all classes of society. All these characters are dramatically interwoven in a narrative which seeks to convey the fullest possible picture of the world of our day. Thus the reader may at one moment be present at the counsels of a group of industrialists; at the next at the birth of a child in one of those pathetic and temporary shelters which have sprung up along the roads used by long-distance lorry drivers; at another in the lodging of the poor and ambitious young woman who has come to London to make her fortune; at another at the cinema with a stout jolly woman no better than she should be. This widening of the framework of the novel gives depth and richness to the book, and the sense not only of watching but of being immersed in the complex, quickly-moving life of the city. The method has its peculiar excitement. The characters are solidly-made human beings. The narrative is at times harsh, at times bitter and poignant, and always direct, vivid and true. *Company Parade* will be published on May 14 at \$2.50.



On April 23 I published a book entitled *The Death Ship*, the story of an American sailor, by B. Traven. *The Death Ship* sold over 250,000 copies in Germany and over 1,000,000 copies in Soviet Russia, and it has been published in twelve other countries.



Max Eastman has written an unusually interesting book. It is called *Artists in Uniform* and it deals with the relation of art to propaganda. In particular it seeks to describe what Mr. Eastman considers to be the devastations wrought in literature by the official communist identification of "proletarian art" with party propaganda. This idea, Mr. Eastman maintains, is in conflict with the views of Marx and Lenin as well as Trotsky and is a part of the process by which Stalin has bureaucratized the Soviet regime.

Part of the book describes the organization of the



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"International Union of Revolutionary Writers," whose activities have brought the "Art is propaganda" slogan into prominence in all countries. It attacks with biting irony the literary ideas and practices of the American communist critics. Mr. Eastman also develops his criticism of the philosophy of "dialectic materialism."

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book is that which deals with — "The Literary Inquisition." Mr. Eastman contends that during the years 1924-32 "Russian literature was converted in its thoughtful regions into a mirthless desert waste inhabited by a few sincere fanatics and a horde of unexampled experts in bootlick, blackmail and blatherskite." The chief literary events of the period, he contends, were "silences of prose writers and suicides of poets." He describes these suicides and explains these silences with "inside stories."

It is a book that will most certainly provoke a great deal of discussion, particularly since Mr. Eastman was formerly the editor of *The Masses* and is still a communist. I am publishing it on May 7 at \$2.50.



It is now more than a year since I published Robert Nathan's *One More Spring*. Still the book goes on selling steadily. The total sale at the time I write is 17,795. Perhaps this book will become the classic novel of our depression. Mr. Nathan's admirers will be glad to know that next month I shall bring out a new edition of his brilliant early novel, *Jonah*, which has long been out of print. Herschel Brickell recently said of *Jonah* in the *New York Evening Post*, "Yielding to no one as an admirer of this author's work, I should like to say that he has never done a better book than *Jonah*, so if you missed it on the first go-around don't let it slip by again."



An unusual number of Borzoi Books have appeared on best seller lists so far this year. The first was Dashiell Hammett's *The Thin Man* (\$2.00), then *Passion's Pilgrims* by Jules Romains (\$2.50), *The Hour of Decision* by Oswald Spengler (\$2.50), *Josephine: Wife of Napoleon* by E. A. Rheinhardt (\$3.00), and most recently *The Postman Always Rings Twice* by James M. Cain (\$2.00). I shall not be surprised if by the time you read this Mr. Mencken's *Treatise on Right and Wrong* and D. L. Murray's *Trumpeter, Sound!* are also best sellers.

Alfred A. Knopf

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